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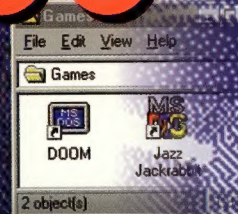
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August 1995

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Product Information Number 142

PC GAMER

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 8 • AUGUST 1995



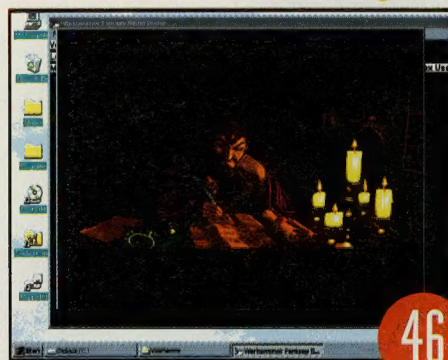
**CAN IT DELIVER?
SPECIAL 9-PAGE
INVESTIGATION**

Features

Windows 95: The New Face of Gaming

After months of media hype, waves of press kits, and countless hours of hands-on research, PC Gamer has come to grips with the behemoth that is Windows 95 — all in an effort to see if this new

Windows can deliver the PC gaming experience you deserve.



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Dozens of new games previewed at the Electronic Entertainment Expo

The PC Gamer staff travels to the City of Angels, L.A., to talk, walk, and drink with the industry's finest game developers and publishers as they show off their hottest new products. See which ones made the grade.



The New Face of Computing

Our cover story on Windows 95 and gaming will give you a good idea what this brand-new operating system hopes to achieve, and how it works. But nothing can prepare you for the experience of actually getting your hands on the thing, loading it on your system and *using* it.

I have to admit something. I hated Windows 3.1. I've always been a DOS guy, reveling in my ability to understand its arcana, and frankly feeling a bit elitist. I've been wrestling with beta builds of Windows 95 for months now, though,

installing and re-installing as each updated version arrived.

Which leads me to another admission: I don't miss DOS. I find that I'm able to do just about everything I want to do, now that I'm using 95, without having to jump through the hoops I used to with DOS. Windows 95 ain't perfect, but it's more powerful and a lot easier to use than DOS. And that's something this industry desperately needs if it's to reach its full potential.

Scoops!



Where you get a glimpse of the future of gaming.

26 The Pandora Device: Under A Killing Moon 2

A gumshoe's job is never done. Just ask Tex Murphy, as Access follows up the star-studded Under a Killing Moon with an even more amazing new game noir.

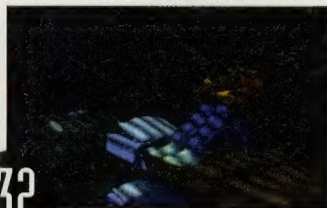
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We can help and those gaming blues, with over 20 cheat codes for Dark Forces, Lost Eden hints, and answers to reader's questions.

138 Letters

What do our zany, unpredictable readers have to say? Find out here on the Letters pages.

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Through peace comes understanding. Your lucky numbers are 6-12-14-23-32-36.

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THE CD

INSTALLING • PLAYING • QUICK TIPS

We're back — and packed with hundreds of megas of the latest PC gaming goodness!



On *The CD* this month, you'll find the latest in *Sierra's Space Quest* series, *Roger Wilco in the Spinal Frontier*. It's a special demo that contains puzzles not found in the full game — so as not to spoil any of the game's surprises, of course.

And on the floppy this issue, we've got a double-whammy lined up for you: *Pyrotechnica* and *Darker*, two sweet-flying arcade games by *Psygnosis* — see page 22 for more details.

We also have the hot new adventure games *Discworld*, *Bureau 13*, and *The Orion Conspiracy*, as well as two challenging puzzlers — Spectrum HoloByte's *Clockwerx*, and *Psygnosis' Lemmings 3D* (and we've just got to say, you've never seen a *Lemmings* like this before!).

There's plenty more, too, including new *Doom II* & *Heretic* WADs, bug patches, shareware, and, to help you

get your online gaming fix this month, we have the front ends to the *ImagiNation Network*, *GENie*, *PlayNet* and *Dwango* networks.

These Disc Pages will help get you started, describe what the games are about, and provide requirements, tips and other helpful data. So before you jump blindly into a demo, give these pages a quick review. They're here to help you enjoy the games to their fullest.

Getting Started

The CD Requirements

Minimum Requirements: 386SX; SVGA (640x480x256 colors); VESA driver; mouse

We Recommend: 486DX2/66;
Double-speed CD drive

These requirements are for loading *The CD* only. Each game demo will have its own additional requirements — so be sure to read the info for each demo carefully! And for you tech types, please note that *The CD* will perform much faster with Smartdrive loaded.

Quick Start: The CD

If you're familiar with DOS, configuring your system, and all those fun things that make PC gaming such an adventure, getting started couldn't be easier. But if you need a little help, here's what you need to do:

1. Insert *The CD*, and change to your CD-ROM drive by typing D:, where D is the name of your CD drive.
2. Type PCG, and press Enter.
3. You're now in our point-and-click front end, where you can look through the text files and help screens for specific demo requirements. If you have any problems installing a game, proceed to *Manual Installation*.

Manual Installation

In the event our front end for *The CD* does not load or run properly on your system, you can still install each game in one of two ways.

First, we've included a text-based install menu on *The CD* to help you out. To load this menu, insert *The CD*, and change to your CD-ROM drive by typing D:, where D is the name of your ROM drive. Now type MENU, and press Enter. Then just follow the directions you see on the screen.

The other method is to look at the Command Box, containing the list of games with their directories and installation commands.

To get running with in this manner, first switch to *The CD*, then change to the appropriate directory by typing CD\DIRECTORY, where DIRECTORY is the one listed in the chart next to the game you're trying to install. Once in the appropriate directory, type the Install Command, then press Enter.

The CD is manufactured by ASR.

Before pressing, it is rigorously tested
and certified virus-free.

If Nothing Works...

We cannot provide technical and customer support for problems you may encounter with the many different demos and patches on the *PC Gamer CD*. Should your copy fail to run at all, with error messages that indicate your CD-ROM drive cannot read the disc, return it to the following address for replacement:

PC Gamer
The CD #9 Replacement
1350 Old Bayshore Highway
Suite 210
Burlingame, CA 94010

Please do this within the first two weeks after receiving the *PC Gamer CD*. If you're a subscriber, you don't need to mail us *The CD*, but if you purchased the magazine on the newsstand, please include it. Also, indicate any error message you receive.

Game	Directory	Installation Command
Discworld	\DISCWLD	INSTDISC
The Orion Conspiracy	\ORION	INSTORIO
Lemmings 3D	\L3D	INSTLEMM
Pyrotechnica	\PYRO	INSTPYRO
Bureau 13	\B13DEMO	INSTB13
CyberBykes	\CYBER	INSTALL
Darker	\DARKER	INSTDARK
Void Pirates	\VOID	INSTVOID
Clockwerx	\CLOCKWRX	INSTCLOC
Airlift Rescue	\AIRLIFT	INSTAIRL
Star Trek: A Final Unity	\STTNG	INSTALL
Terminal Velocity	\TERMINAL	INSTALL
PlayNet	\PLAYNET	DOOM1N2 & HERETIC
GEnie	\GENIE	SETUP
ImagiNation Network	\IMAGINE	FUN
Dwango	\DWANGO	
Heretic WADS	\HERETIC	
Doom WADS	\DOOM	
Bug Patches	\PATCHES	

Free Demos!

And our new PC Gamer Web Site!

First off, remember: You won't find the Floppy Edition of *PC Gamer* on the newsstand anymore. Only our floppy subscribers will get the floppy disk — delivered right to their homes — each month. But you can still nab the free demos on the floppy disk, and a whole lot more!

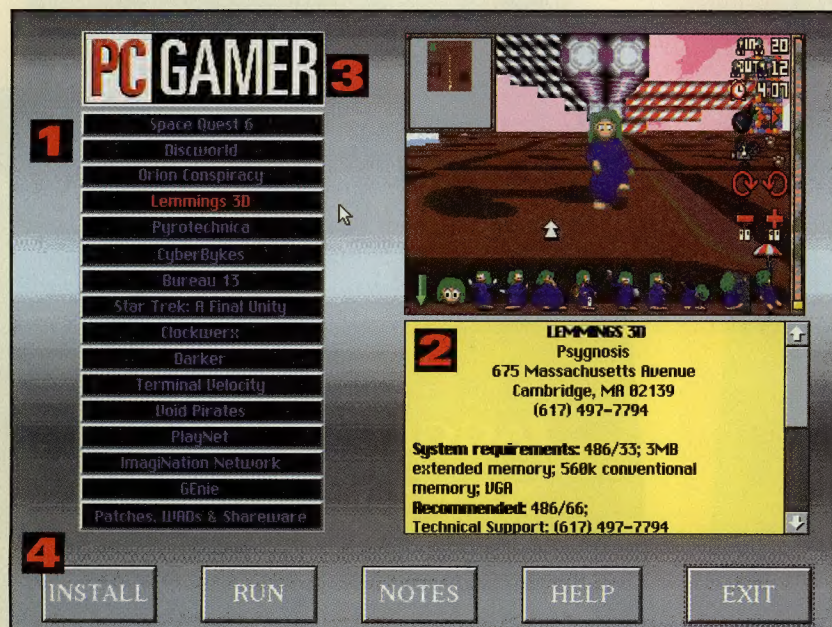
Here's the deal for newsstand buyers: You now have the choice of purchasing either the CD-ROM Edition of *PC Gamer* for \$7.95, or *PC Gamer* without a CD-ROM or floppy disk for the new low price of \$3.95. *PC Gamer* newsstand buyers still have the opportunity to get free game demos, though, in several different ways:

1. You can download game demos and other good stuff from our World Wide Web site at <http://www.pcgamer.com> on the Internet. You can access this site either via an Internet account or through one of the major online services, such as America Online, GEnie, or Prodigy. Our new web site will let you download this month's floppy demos, access Strategy Central Plus, and more. Check it out!

2. You can mail us the envelope that's bound in this issue. The order form on the envelope gives you four options:

- Get a HD disk (*The Floppy*) mailed directly to you for just \$2.95 shipping and handling.
- Get a CD-ROM disc (*The CD*) mailed to you for just \$5.95 shipping and handling.
- Subscribe to *PC Gamer* with HD disks for \$47.95.
- Subscribe to *PC Gamer* with CD-ROM discs for \$47.95.

With all these options, you're sure to find one that's best for you!



How to use the Front End

- 1 Table of contents.** Click on the program you wish to run — your selection will be highlighted.
- 2 Once a title is selected,** this will give a brief description and system requirements for the program.
- 3 The PCG Logo.** Click here to return to the welcome screen at any time.
- 4 The Icons —** when highlighted, the following options are available:

INSTALL — Choose this to install the program to your hard drive, and to set up program options.

RUN — Click here to run the game from The CD.

NOTES — Select this icon for more information on each program.

HELP — This icon offers basic information about the user interface.

EXIT — Click on this one, and it's back DOS City.

Pyrotechnica

Company: Psygnosis
Phone: (617) 497-7794
Release date: Late summer
Category: Flight arcade shooter
Requirements: 486/25; 4MB RAM; 2MB hard-drive space
Install: \PYRO\INSTPYRO.BAT

Darker

Company: Psygnosis
Phone: (617) 497-7794
Category: Flight arcade shooter
Release date: Late summer
Requirements: 386/40; 1MB hard-drive space
Install: \DARKER\INSTDARK.BAT

For more info on *Pyrotechnica* and *Darker* turn to page 22...

TWIN

PEAKS



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CD-ROM Today

"Best in Entertainment:
Fantasy Role-Playing Game of 1994"

Computer Gaming World
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"Although it is truly a genre-busting product,
it does fit into one category: Must-buy!"

RATING ★★★★★

Jeff James,
Computer Gaming World

**FINAL
VERDICT:**
89%

"HIGHS: An utterly
engrossing experience."

PC Gamer



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like strategy, you'll love this game."

VALUE: ★★★★★

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Product Information Number 129

Space Quest VI: Roger Wilco in The Spinal Frontier

Company: Sierra On-Line
 Phone: (800) 743-7725
 Release Date: Available now
 Category: Graphic adventure
 Required: 486/25, 5MB RAM, Double-speed
 CD-ROM, Sound card
 Install: UNSTALL

The galaxy's favorite janitor returns in the newest space spoof by Sierra, *Space Quest 6: Roger Wilco in The Spinal Frontier*. The demo on our CD is its own little adventure, with puzzles that aren't found in the final game. But this preview will give you a good idea about how the game works and what the final product will look like.

The story opens with Roger doing what he does best — cleaning. He's currently assigned to Deepship 86, a ship that looks less like the *Enterprise* than an athletic supporter. Suddenly, weird aliens appear in an Escher-looking ship, and take over the Deepship by turning the crew into scoops of lemon sorbet. The aliens — half-humanoid, half-kitchen appliance — have an eerie resemblance

to the Borg of Star Trek fame, and fall prey to the common assumption that Roger is insignificant. As a result, he's the only one to avoid an icy transformation into a dessert dish.

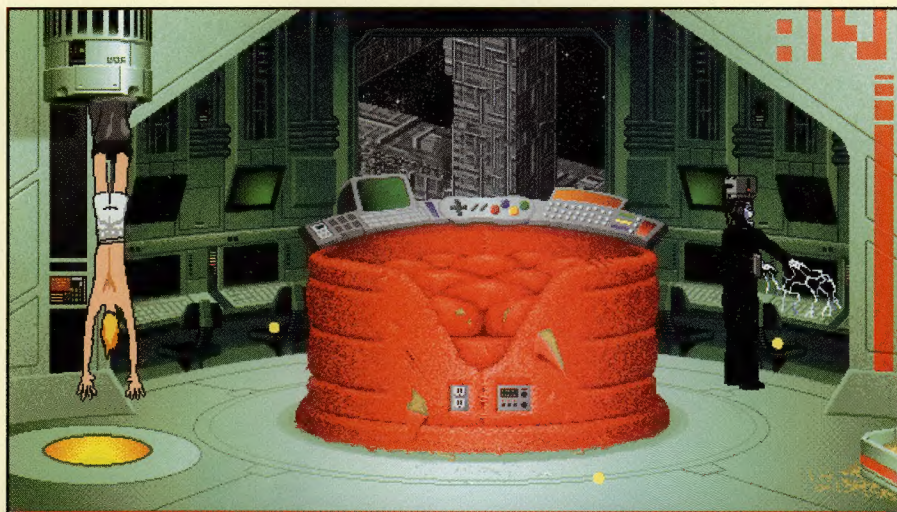
So, once again, it's up to you to guide our cleaning expert on his journey to keep himself alive, and

solve the problems of the universe in the process. Be sure you pick up anything you can, and leave no stone (or computer terminal) unturned.

The interface is all point-and-click, with icons directing movement, use, viewing, and talking. Scroll through the options by right-clicking the mouse, or just select the action on the menu bar under the viewing window. Game options are also accessed from the menu.

Although you can't save your game in this demo, don't worry about it. If you manage to get yourself killed, you'll be given another chance without having to start over.

Click on anything and everything; if nothing else, you'll get a chuckle out of some of the responses. Make sure you check out all of the ships in the bay where you start. You might recognize a few of them from their fame on the big screen. Also, check out the computer terminal database on alien races. Not only will you get a clue there (hint hint) but you'll find interesting (and funny) tidbits on some of the alien species in the other Space Quest games.



FEET EYES HANDS MOUTH POCKETS HELP CONTROL DEMO SIMULATION

Talk about a rough system of transportation! The vacuum method probably worked better on *The Jetsons*. This form of transporation will not only move you to different parts of the ship, it will rearrange your clothing in the process. It's a good thing Roger isn't too modest!

HINT

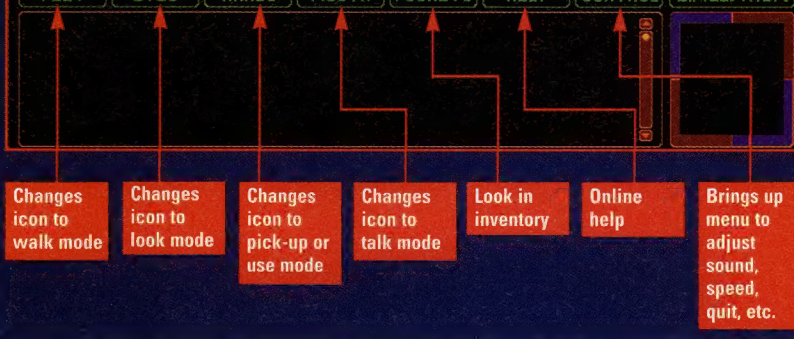
In the shuttle bay where the game starts, there's only one shuttle you can enter. Be sure to check the Personal Effects Stowage Compartment in the cockpit for some necessary items! Look carefully; it's easy to miss.

A Janitor's Work is Never Done...

...but it doesn't have to be drudgery. Just use the commands below to help Roger clean up the Universe. Maybe you should start with Roger's room (below). You'd think a janitor would place more emphasis on cleanliness!



FEET EYES HANDS MOUTH POCKETS HELP CONTROL DEMO SIMULATION



PUMPS 1 GALLON A MINUTE.

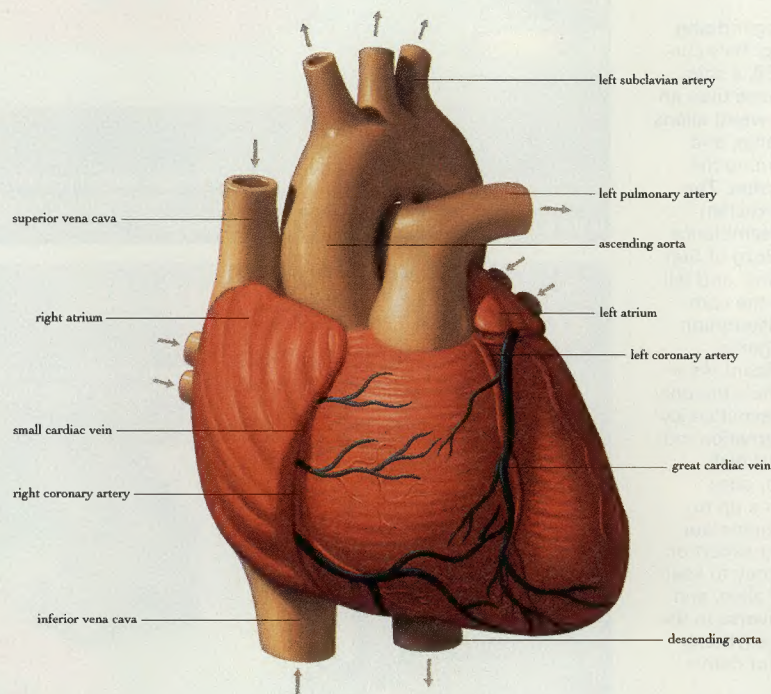


FIG. 34.—The Human Heart.

PUMPS 25 GALLONS A MINUTE.



Put your pulse in overdrive. *Fade To Black* is the adrenaline-pumping sequel to *Flashback* from Delphine. It's a mind-bending combination of fluid, life-like animation and complete control over seemingly unlimited character movements. Along the way, multiple camera angles mirror every heart-stopping turn. Even the sound and music score won't give you a moment's peace. Until you rest in eternal peace.



Delphine Software International, its logo, *Fade To Black* and *Flashback* are trademarks of Delphine Software International. Electronic Arts is a registered trademark of Electronic Arts. Call 1-800-771-3772 for information on game ratings.

<http://www.ea.com/eastudio.html>

FOR PC-CD

Product Information Number 99

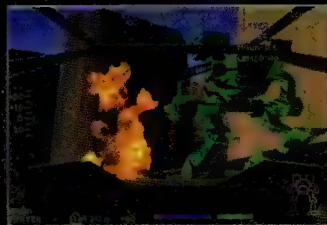
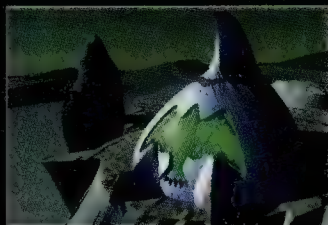


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Product Information Number 83

ACTIVISION[®]

Discworld

Company: Psygnosis
Phone: (617) 497-7794
Release date: Available now
Category: Adventure game
Required: 486/33; 4MB RAM; mouse; 1.5MB hard-drive space
Install: \DISCWLD\INSTALL

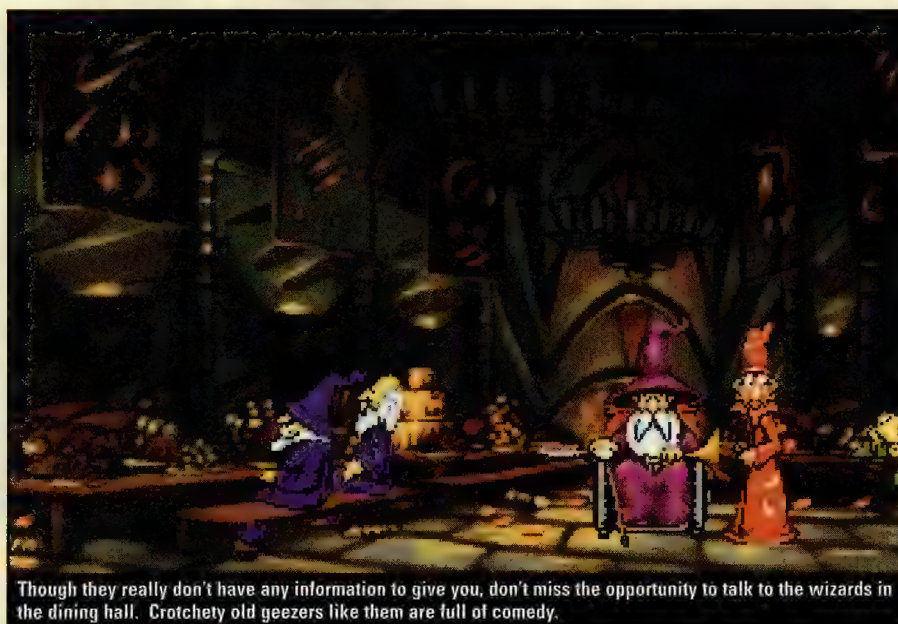
Get ready to experience one of the funniest adventure games we've seen in quite a while with our demo of *Discworld* from Psygnosis. This tongue-in-cheek fantasy/adventure game is based on Terry Pratchett's popular *Discworld* books, and casts you as the sometimes heroic, often hapless, wizard Rincewind.

As the demo starts, a dragon has been unleashed on *Discworld*, and Rincewind is enlisted by the arch-wizard of Unseen University and sent on a quest to find the items that can get rid of the dreaded dragon.

You'll get a good sampling of puzzles as you search the University for some way

HINT

After the arch-wizard tells you of your quest and sends you to the library, you'll need to give the librarian a little incentive to get the right book for you. Use the broom from the closet on the lower level to wake up your luggage, then look inside. You'll find a banana that'll get that monkey-man moving.



Though they really don't have any information to give you, don't miss the opportunity to talk to the wizards in the dining hall. Crotchety old geezers like them are full of comedy.

to defeat the dragon, and get a taste of the game's odd humor as well, by talking to the characters and listening to the wonderful voice acting provided by "Monty Python" alumnus Eric Idle (who plays Rincewind), and a couple of other famous British actors, like John Pertwee ("Doctor Who") and Tony Richardson ("Black Adder").

The game uses a mouse interface for

movement, talking, and inventory management. Just move the cursor where you want Rincewind to go, then give a click on the left mouse button. To pick up items or talk to someone, double-click with the left button. To access Rincewind's inventory or his luggage's, just left-click on Rincewind or the luggage. To examine items, right-click on the object you want to learn more about.

The Orion Conspiracy

Company: Domark
Phone: (415) 513-8929
Release Date: Available now
Category: Graphic adventure
Required: 386/33; Double-speed CD-ROM; SVGA; 6MB HD space; mouse; 3MB extended memory
Install: \ORION\INSTALL



You start in the observation pod. These are the only items you carry so far. Don't worry, though. They're enough for this demo.

Get ready for sci-fi with an attitude in Domark's newest graphic adventure, *The Orion Conspiracy*. In this beautifully rendered game, you'll play Devlin McCormack, the father of a young man killed in a routine operation on the Cerberus research station. But once Devlin

arrives for the funeral, he finds that his son's death was no accident, so he investigates the murder. During the course of his search, there is another death, and Devlin is accused of the crime.

The demo starts when Devlin is placed in the observation pod on the station to await his trial for murder. Your job is to get him out of the pod and continue his search for the real murderer. The controls are simple; when the cursor is placed over an item or place

HINT

This will get you out of the observation pod. First, take the telescope and dismantle it until you separate the tube from the lens. Also, search your food rations so you can separate out the piece of biscuit. Click on the vent grate, and you'll be given the opportunity to use the lens to open it. Attach the hollow tube to the air-flow pipe, and stuff the piece of food into the other end. This will cause the computer to think there is no oxygen flow to the room, and the doors will open. The rest is up to you!

that can be affected, you will either hear a description of it, or be given a choice of actions. As you gather items, you'll be given more choices. To view your inventory, move the cursor to the bottom of the screen. To access game options, such as toggling the subtitles, press the Escape key. To end the game, press Alt-X.

Full voice and music is included in the demo, although the adult language you can look forward to in the full version of the game has been cut out of the demo. If you're squeamish, be warned that the full game also contains some pretty violent scenes.

Lemmings 3D

Company: Psygnosis
 Phone: (617) 497-7794
 Release date: September
 Category: Puzzle game
 Requirements: 486/33; 3MB extended mem.; 560k conventional memory
 Install: \L3DVN\STL3D

Fans of the popular Lemmings puzzlers will find new surprises are in store with Psygnosis' innovative twist on those classic games. In this exciting 10-level demo of *Lemmings 3D*, the two dimensional levels of the original Lemmings games have given way to a 3D environment that allows you complete freedom to view the puzzle from any angle, and even get a lemmings'-eye view of the action with a virtual-lemming option.

While the look of this one is brand new, the heart of the game remains the same; these little knuckle-heads still walk aimlessly toward their death, through a variety of unique settings from medieval castles and winter landscapes to our staff personal favorite, the "Aliens" movie-inspired Aliemms level. And it's up to you to figure out a way to guide them safely home by using special skills to build, block, and bomb through each level's obstacles.

Thankfully, you'll be able to get things under control in no time, with a combination of mouse and keyboard controls that are fairly easy to master. You'll view the action through use of

fixed cameras or a movable camera perspective, which you'll control with the cursor keys or the mouse.

Once you've got the camera in position you can change the elevation of your view by using the + (lower) and - (raise) keys on the numeric keypad to get a bird's eye view of the lemmings in action or to move around obstacles.

The mouse is used to select a skill you want to give a particular lemming. Then to enable that skill, just move the pointer over the lemming and left click.

While it's pretty easy to get a handle on, we do recommend that you take advantage of the practice mode before moving on to the actual levels.

And if you find the game is running slowly on your system, you can use the options menu to customize detail levels, set the screen size and reduce the number of camera views to optimize the performance for your system.



The first level of Lemmings 3D can be a bit tricky, so have the first lemming begin building a bridge to the upper level almost immediately.

TIP

Before you get overrun by a horde of lemmings while you're still trying to solve a puzzle, use the - key to decrease the release rate of the lemmings to give you time to plan your attack. Then, once you've got the puzzle solved, use the + key to get those lemmings flowing freely again.

And if you're a sci-fi fan you'll want to take a peek at the Aliemms level — just type in the password PADUASOY.

Lemmings 3D: The Next Generation



- Number of Lemmings successfully saved
- Number of Lemmings left on the level
- Time left
- Time Advance
- Nuke Lemmings (end level)
- Switch to camera view
- Pause
- Rotate camera
- Slow Lemmings release
- Speed up Lemmings release
- By clicking your right mouse button on the scroll bar, you can adjust the elevation of the camera view.

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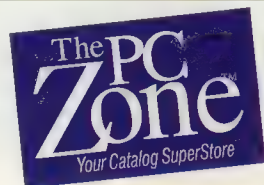
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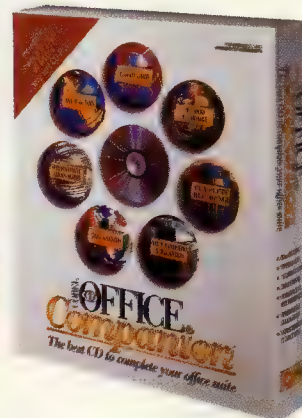


1-800-258-2088

Please mention source code CT20.

\$99.98

US\$ plus applicable taxes.



*Clipart, font and photo libraries vary from the standalone versions of CorelFLOW 2 and Corel GALLERY 2.



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Document #1058

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Product Information Number 95

KUR-0141

Void Pirates

Company: SoftSource
Phone: (505) 523-6789
Release Date: This summer
Category: Space simulator
Required: 386/33; 4MB RAM; 4.5MB hard-drive space; Windows 3.1 or higher
Install: VOIDVNSTVOID

In this tiny little peek at *Void Pirates*, you get to climb behind the stick of a pirate ship and terrorize your way through the galaxy — for sixty sec-

TIP

For some real fun, try this: Close your eyes, scoot your mouse around the screen, and keep clicking. We managed to down two ships in sixty seconds by using this old Jedi trick! Now, no peeking...

onds. This short demo will give you a sample of just one aspect of the game; sitting in the gun turret, moving your cursor around the screen to blow ships out of the sky. The mouse-clicking is fast and furious, so you better get yourself ready for a fight.

In the full version, however, you're able to control ship functions, take over helpless freighters, trade with other rogues, and generally avoid the authorities. You also get a bit of a preview slide show — judging from some of the screen shots, *Void Pirates* might turn out to be a pretty hot title. Look for this space action/adventure sometime this Summer.



Here comes another one. Line up the target area, start clicking your mouse, and blow that sucker to bits.

CyberBykes

Company: GameTek Inc.
Phone: (800) 439-3995
Release Date: Late fall
Category: Action
Required: 486/33; 8MB RAM; 9MB hard-drive space
Install: CYBERINSTALL

CyberBykes is a polygon-based, high-speed action shoot-em-up reminiscent of *Spectre VR*. The year is 2007, and the World Treaty Organization, the military arm of the Central Government, has taken over several cities in a fascist revolt. When the Central Government realizes that military secrets and items were left behind in the takeover, they pull you out of retirement.

Riding a souped-up motorcycle and armed to the teeth with missiles and a chain gun, your job is to enter the occupied cities and rescue the equipment and documents left behind. You'll have to dodge missiles, avoid gun turrets, and duke it out with the enemy's own Bykes. Keep an eye on your armor, and make sure you get out of there before the timer runs out, or you'll soon be a quivering mass of seared parts as the bad guys find out you're in their city.

There are many options to help the game run more smooth, but there's no getting around the demands it'll make of your system. Be sure you *do not* have EMS memory loaded, or it will not run. For the highest and best resolutions and



Keep a sharp eye out and a steady hand on the mouse, and you'll ride this baby to victory!

most detail, you'll definitely need a Pentium computer.

Control ultimately is best with the mouse, although it takes a bit of getting used to. By pushing both mouse buttons at once, you enter "Look Around" mode. You can look in any direction you want while your byke keeps going straight. The trick is to fire in the direction you're looking, not necessarily the direction you're traveling. Pretty handy when you're getting nailed from behind!

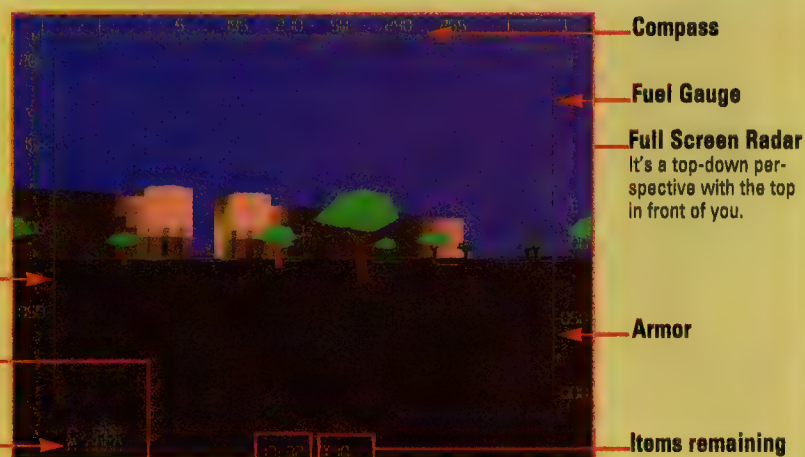
CyberBykes

	Accelerate
	Brakes
	Left
	Right
	Fire Weapons
	Toggle Weapons
	Look behind
	Extend view to max
	Look Around
	View map

Mouse Buttons:

Accelerate.....Left button
 Brake.....Right button
 Look Around.....Both buttons

The Battle Screen



Speedometer

Time

Time remaining before you're discovered.

Weapons

The highlighted item fires when you hit the spacebar.

Compass

Fuel Gauge

Full Screen Radar

It's a top-down perspective with the top in front of you.

Armor

Items remaining

HE'S THE
VILLAIN ...



D.W. BRADLEY'S CYBERMAGE

DARKLIGHT AWAKENING™

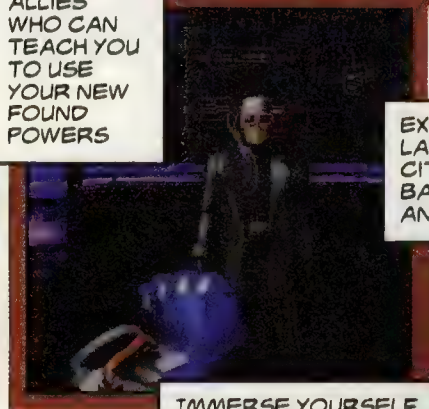
... YOU'RE
THE HERO



ATTACK WITH
HAND-TO-HAND
WEAPONS, RANGED
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SUPER POWERS



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ALLIES
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FOUND
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CHECK OUT THE DEMO AT OUR WORLD WIDE WEB SITE.

[HTTP://WWW.EA.COM/ORIGIN.HTML](http://www.ea.com/origin.html)

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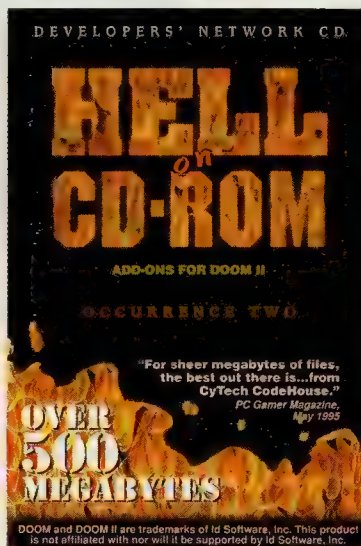
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Product Information Number 124

THIS CD-ROM IS SO GOOD... YOU'LL CRY YOUR PANTS!

From the cauldrons of CyberSpace, the most comprehensive collection of DOOM II levels, editors, utilities, and documentation ever attempted by earthlings. Hell on CD-ROM was compiled from sources found on the Internet and other on-line services. This all new CD-ROM includes: ■ LMP Player—a tool that lets you point and click your way through the archives of prerecorded DOOM II games and launch the recording without having to exit to DOS. You can watch DOOM II Master Players slug their way through every level. Ever wonder how they do it? Now see for yourself! View actual multiplayer DeathMatches from any player's perspective, demos of new levels, and training examples.



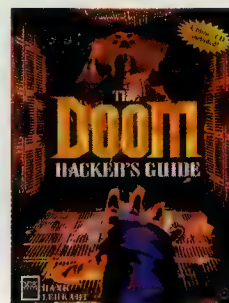
Read the synopsis as you go or print the full descriptions. ■ WadFest II .WAD runner lets you point and click your way through an archive of thousands of new DOOM II levels. Pick the .WAD, the level, the skill, view/print the description, and more. You have full control over how the game is played with the easiest, fastest interface on the planet. Play directly from the CD or copy to your hard drive. ■ CDGofer 2.0 gives you instant access to the vast archives of the largest collection of DOOM II related shareware and freeware. There are thousands of files organized into descriptive discrete volumes, all accessible from the new friendly, intuitive graphical user interface with on-line context-sensitive help.

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MasterCard/VISA/Discover/AMEX/check/money orders accepted. All orders shipped within 24 hours. DoomWare requires registered version of Doom. Hell on CD-ROM requires Doom II. Doom and Doom II are registered trademarks of id Software, Inc. © 1995 CyTech CodeHouse

Product Information Number 137

Bureau 13

Company: GameTek Inc.
Phone: (800) 439-3995
Release Date: Available now
Category: Graphic adventure
Required: 386/33, 2MB RAM, 8MB HD space
Install: \B13DEMO\INSTB13

Do you get tired of graphic adventures that always have you playing a boring good guy — without any special supernatural skills? Yearning to throw in a bit of magic when you just can't find the item you need? Well, now's your chance. In GameTek's graphic mystery *Bureau 13*, you can choose to play as a vampire, a thief, a hacker, a priest, a witch, or a woman in mechanized body armor. You choose two members from the list to investigate the attempted murder of a small-town sheriff.

And why do you get to do all this? Because you're part of Bureau 13, a top-secret organization dedicated to the protection of the innocent. A member of the team, a certain J.P. Withers, has gone renegade, and after his attempt to blow the sheriff to bits, your team is sent in to uncover the mystery of Stratusburg and bring Withers in.

The team you choose will affect the way you solve problems, as each member has his or her own special skills. To get past a locked door, for example, Jimmy Suttle (the thief), will pick the lock. But Alexander Keltin, the vampire, can transform into mist and float through to the other side. So choose carefully who you take with you, and remember their special skills. It'll take a combination of talents to reach the end of this demo.

Unlike other games with two team members walking around, you can split up the characters in *Bureau 13*. Simply tell one to follow, or stay put. If he stays, he will be at the same spot when you return.

You choose which character to control by moving the mouse to the top of



Right-click at the top of the screen to bring up the menu bar to check inventory, switch characters, and perform special skills.

the screen and right-clicking to bring up the character menu. Click on the left or right side to choose. If your characters are split up, your view will shift to the location of the one you want to control. This menu also contains the commands to perform your specialized skills, like turning the vampire into a cloud of mist.



Star Trek: A Final Unity

Company: Spectrum HoloByte
Category: Adventure
Phone: (510) 522-3584
Release date: Available now
Requirements: 386; SVGA, 3072k conventional memory, mouse, 6MB hard-drive space
Install: \STTNG\INSTST

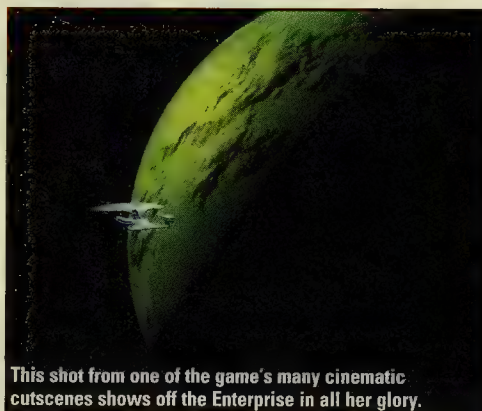
There's no doubt about it: This is one of the most eagerly (and long) anticipated computer games ever, and for fans of the "Star Trek: The Next Generation" television show who've been waiting patiently during the lengthy development, it looks like it's worth the wait.

In this demo of *A Final Unity*, you'll

view the progress that's been made over the past year and even take a tour of the bridge of the famous Enterprise 1701-D. You also can view the opening screens and watch the landing party tackle the mysteries of the universe.

The demo as well as the full game features the complete cast of "ST:TNG" providing voice-overs for all of the game's dialog.

To get the best performance out of the demo, you'll want to use the auto-detect option when selecting a video mode, as some animations will not run if you select an option not supported by your particular system.



This shot from one of the game's many cinematic cutscenes shows off the Enterprise in all her glory.

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Terminal Velocity

Company: 3D Realms Entertainment
 Phone: (214) 278-5655
 Release Date: Available now
 Category: Action shooter
 Required: 486/33; 4MB RAM; 10MB hard-drive space
 Install: \TERMINAL\INSTTERM

Here's the updated version of *Terminal Velocity* we promised in the July issue. It fixes the memory-related problems and gets things running smoothly. So grab your joystick and get ready for this sci-fi shoot-'em-up.

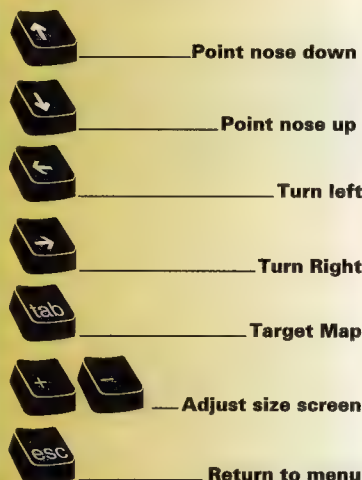
In the distant future, the people of Earth have journeyed beyond the edges of the Milky Way and have met many strange and often violent species. Yet under the watchful eye of the Alliance of Space-Faring Alien Races, Earth has been able to enjoy

years of peaceful co-existence with species throughout the galaxy. But now Earth finds itself under attack from these former friends and is on the verge of collapse. Armed with a state-of-the-art fighter-craft, your task is to break through enemy the perimeter defenses and discover what's behind Earth's sudden unpopularity.

Nine challenging missions on three separate worlds await you in this demo, with a variety of weapons to test your bogey-busting abilities on a host of airborne enemies and ground-based threats. You'll also find plenty of power-ups, weapons and secret mines to help even the odds against the superior forces.

The demo also includes modem and network options to allow you and your friends to fight for the safety of Earth collectively or against each other over the planet of your choice.

Terminal Velocity



Safe Flyin'



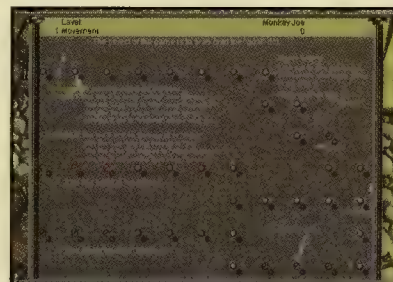
Clockwerx

Company: Spectrum HoloByte
 Category: Puzzle game
 Phone: (510) 522-3584
 Release date: Available now
 Requirements: 386/33 4MB RAM; Windows 3.1; SVGA; 2MB HD space; mouse
 Install: \CLOCKWRX\INSTALL

If you've been looking for a challenging puzzle game you can play under Windows during those long downloads or print jobs, then give this demo of *Clockwerx* a try.

Though the full game features 100 demanding levels, our 10-level primer should prove more than enough of a challenge to keep you coming back for more, as you try to control a spinning clock hand through a maze of dots and devious hazards, spinning toward the ever-important Goal Dot.

Getting to the goal ain't easy — but thankfully, as a Windows based-game, controlling the action couldn't be simpler, with the mouse used as the default controller for all the movements and menu selections (though the keyboard can be selected). To move your clock hand to an adjacent dot, just click the left mouse button on the dot nearest your hand, and you're off. And if you find it's too tough, or you want more time to complete a level, there are a number of customizable features that allow you to fine-tune the action to suit your particular skill level.



Pay close attention to the instructions in these tutorials to help guide you through the levels. Then, once you've got the level down, head back at a higher difficulty level and try to snag all those bonus points.

TIP

You can avoid the sweeping movements of an enemy clock hand on an adjacent dot by reversing the rotation of your hand with a left click.

Play Net

Play Net

Phone: (800) PLAY-NET

Install: \PLAYNET\PCIDM55.EXE

So you want to play *Doom* across the phone lines, but you just can't seem to find anybody that's willing to join you in a Deathmatch at 1 a.m.? Well, look no further. *Play Net* is a multi-player network that's been established specifically to take advantage of *Doom* and *Doom II*'s modem capability and to give you the opportunity to play with like-minded Deathmatchers.

In addition to support for *Doom* and *Doom II*, *Play Net* now supports *Heretic*, and will soon support *Descent*. You'll also get other features you'd expect from an online service, like shopping, file libraries, chat areas and e-mail.

To run *Play Net* you'll need *Doom*, *Doom II*, or *Heretic*, a 9600 baud modem and, of course, this front end.

After installation, you'll need to fill out the configuration screens. After that, you'll be able to make new friends and then kill them. Payment info is online. Your initial call is 100% free.

As of this writing the rates for *Play Net, Inc.* were:

Target Class	\$10.00	5 hours
Killer Class	\$25.00	13 hours
Assassin Class	\$50.00	30 hours



So you say you have killed monster after monster after monster in *Doom* and *Doom II*. What do you do with your life now? Log on to the *Play Net* for some killer DeathMatch action!

ImagiNation Network

ImagiNation Network

Phone: (800) IMAGINI

Required: 15MB HD space

Install: \IMAGINE\FUN.BAT

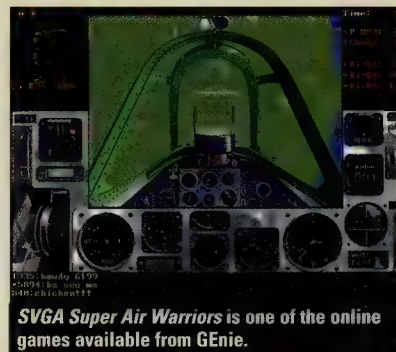
If you're looking for an online service that's devoted to having fun, then check out the *ImagiNation Network*. Where most services have bland screen after screen of indecipherable jargon, or at best glitzy colors with the same mindnumbing jargon, *ImagiNation* offers an entirely different interface — a town motif where the various utilities and services are couched in a friendly, familiar surroundings. The friendliness even extends to your own online persona, a graphic representation of you that you can customize to show people what you're really like.

E-mail, conferences, entertainment areas, and the promise of future on-ramps to the Info Autobahn make *ImagiNation* a viable alternative to millions

who don't really want to know the ins and outs of ZModem and Wildcat, or learn the lexicon of the Internet...at least not yet. Install *ImagiNation* and get all the info on how to get online.

After you install *ImagiNation*, type INN at the DOS prompt and you'll go to the sign-on screens. Because the *ImagiNation Network* ain't free, here are the various user plans and the rates that we received by time of publication.

Welcome Plan	\$9.95/month	5 hours/month
10 Plan	\$19.95/month	10 hours/month
15 Plan	\$29.95/month	15 hours/month
25 Plan	\$49.95/month	25 hours/month
50 Plan	\$99.95/month	50 hours/month



SVGA Super Air Warriors is one of the online games available from GENie.

GENie for Windows

with *Cyberstrike* and *SVGA Air Warrior*

GENie

Phone: (800) 638-9636

Required: Windows 3.1, 4MB HD space

Install: \GENIE\INSTGENI

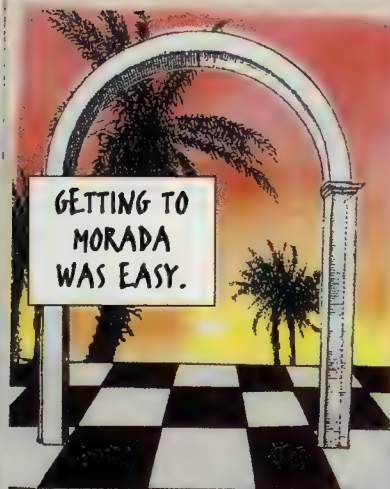
For our readers who prefer human opponents over some programmer's idea of artificial intelligence, you'll want to check out the online network *GENie*. Like most online networks, *GENie* offers e-mail, BBS access, conferencing and, as our readers will be glad to note, multi-player gaming. To take advantage of the multi-player games, we've included the front ends to run *Cyberstrike* and *SVGA Air Warrior*, two of the most popular games on *GENie*.

Flight sim fans will want to try out *SVGA Air Warrior*, which will have you flying all types of warplanes through several eras of air combat, from biplanes to modern aircraft. The controls are fairly simple, but with all those human opponents, the missions can get pretty challenging.

Cyberstrike takes you into a futuristic battle scenario where you pilot a massive battle-mech. It's a pretty demanding sim, but once you've got a handle on the controls, you'll be able to roam around blasting the armor off of other on-line pilots. Energy runs everything in this game — shields, guns and engines — so stay powered up.

The *GENie* front end will require Windows, 4MB hard-drive space and VGA graphics. *Cyberstrike* will require an additional 2.5MB hard drive space, and *SVGA Air Warrior* will require a whopping 38MB of additional hard drive space. Each game comes with a README.TXT or MANUAL.DOC file that details the various controls.

For basic service including e-mail, multi-player games and online chat, the current rates are \$8.95 per month for the first four hours non-prime time and \$3.00 per hour after the initial four hours have been used. There's an additional surcharge of \$9.50 per hour for prime-time usage. All rates are for the continental U.S.



GETTING TO
MORADA
WAS EASY.



IT WAS SHEER
MURDER ONCE WE
ARRIVED.



NOTHING
WAS
AS IT
SEEMED.



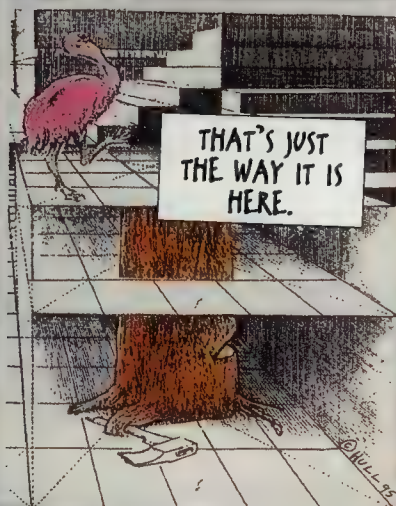
INCLUDING US.



WE HAD RE-INVENTED
OURSELVES.



IN THE SCHEME
OF THINGS...



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THE WAY IT IS
HERE.



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THE FLOPPY

INSTALLING • PLAYING • QUICK TIPS

Take to the skies in the latest arcade flight games from Psygnosis. We have TWO, count 'em TWO, of these ultracool space shoot-'em-ups.

Quick Start: The Floppy

The HD disk

Installation couldn't be easier!

1. Insert the 3.5" diskette and change to that drive.
2. Type INSTALL and choose the hard drive you wish to install (to type C where "C" is the letter of your hard drive).
3. Select the game you wish to install.

If Nothing Works...

Unfortunately, we can't provide technical support for problems you may encounter with *The Floppy*, *Pyrotechnica* or *Darker*. But should your copy fail to run at all, or display error messages that indicate the disk itself is bad, send a letter to the address at the right for replacement.

The Floppy is manufactured by MegaSoft, one of the foremost disk duplicators in America. Before duplication, it is rigorously tested and certified to be virus-free.



The Floppy Replacement
August 1995

PC Gamer

1350 Old Bayshore Highway
Suite 210

Burlingame, CA 94010

Indicate any error message
you receive.

Pyrotechnica

Company: Psygnosis
Phone: (617) 497-7794
Release date: Late summer
Category: Flight arcade shooter
Requirements: 486/25; 4MB RAM; 2MB hard-drive space
Install from CD: PYROVINSTPYRO.BAT

Pilot a craft on retrieval and rescue missions set in the core of planets left by ancient, extinct civilizations. You'll need to pivot through caverns, and avoid or destroy the automated defense drones left in place.



Maneuvering can be entrancing as this game exhibits a stark beauty you don't see too often these days.

CHALLENGE

It'll take 100,000 points, but can you make the High Score table?

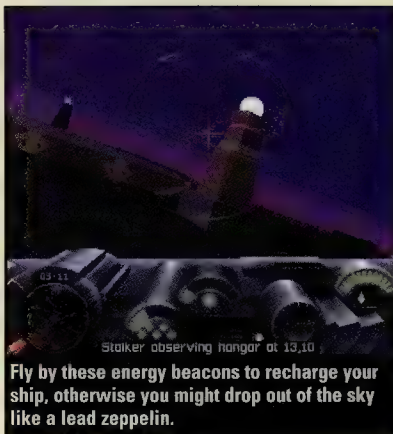
Pyrotechnica Controls

Movement	Joystick, Cursors
Primary weapon	Button 1, Space
Radar homing missiles	F1
Infrared missile	F2
Rockets	F3
Grenades	F4
Select secondary weapons	Button two or S
Light laser	F5
Cannon	F6
Heavy laser	F7
Mines	F8
Select speed	0-9
Weapon view	W
External/internal view	E
Pause game	P
Release flares	F
Release Chaff	C
View map	M
Exit game	End key

Darker

Company: Psygnosis
Phone: (617) 497-7794
Release date: Late summer
Category: Flight arcade shooter
Requirements: 386/40; 1MB hard-drive space
Install from CD: DARKERVINSTDARK.BAT

You're a fighter pilot flying a Caero Fighter above Delphi City. The object is simple: just knock out everything in the skies, while keeping your ship out of danger. This demo provides one of the three fighters available in the full game, and lets you test three of its eight weapons.



Fly by these energy beacons to recharge your ship, otherwise you might drop out of the sky like a lead zeppelin.

Darker Controls

Fire primary weapon	Space, button 1
Fire secondary weapon	Alt, button 2
Assign pinner direct to main weapon	1
Assign pinner mimic to main weapon	2
Secondary weapon	0
Press and hold with Cursors to increase power	CTRL
Brakes	Backspace
Clear target lock on	Capslock
Engage engine	E
Boost engine	Enter
Aircraft control	Cursors
Altitude fix mode toggle	A
Initialize joystick	J

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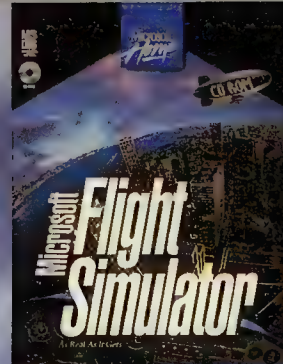


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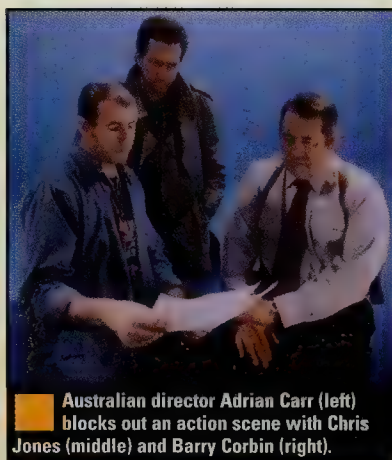
Product Information Number 117

The Pandora Device

Tex Murphy is back, and the Pod People have him!

Access' new Tex Murphy adventure promises to be as big a leap beyond *Under a Killing Moon* as *UKM* was over *Martian Memorandum*.

—William R. Trotter



Australian director Adrian Carr (left) blocks out an action scene with Chris Jones (middle) and Barry Corbin (right).

career goes back more than forty years), but he is the consummate professional, and only a slight redness in the eyes betrays the fatigue he must be feeling at this point.

He and Jones are huddled over a blue-painted prop that will eventually be the control panel of a flying saucer.

"We've got to get out of here right now, Tex!" cries McCarthy, jabbing at imaginary control knobs.

"What's happening?" says "Tex."

"This ship is filled with highly explosive anti-hydrogen pods and it's going to blow in two minutes!"

Tex leans in conspiratorially, his expression incredulous.

"Pods?" he inquires.

"Yes," responds McCarthy, his voice dropping to a barely audible menacing whisper, "Pods!"

"Cut! That's perfect!" says director Adrian Carr, while McCarthy, Jones, and everyone else on the set chortles at the nudge-nudge reference to McCarthy's classic 1956 sci-fi movie, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

If the film-noir detective genre set the tone for *Under a Killing Moon*, this successor game takes its cue from not only the science fiction classics of the 1950s, but from today's hottest sci-fi series (after the *Star Trek* shows, of course), the Fox network's already-legendary "The X-Files."

The story begins when Tex Murphy is retained by a mysterious older gentleman named Gordon Fitzpatrick (Kevin McCarthy) to track down an old friend named Thomas Malloy (played by John Agar, who starred in such Fifties classics as *Tarantula*, *The Mole People*, and *The Brain from Planet Aros*). After much investigating, figuring out several baffling puzzle-clues, and committing the odd felony or two, Tex locates Malloy.

Malloy, who once worked at the top secret Roswell base, confirms that the UFO crash was real and that some of the alien technology back-engineered from the wreckage was used in the weapons of World War Three. Malloy has devoted his life to deciphering the alien hieroglyphics found on the UFO and has finally made a breakthrough. Just as he's about to reveal the translation to Tex, however, two "men in black" burst in and assassinate him,

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Game: The Pandora Device
Designers: Aaron Connors, Chris Jones
Publisher: Access Software Inc., 4750 Wiley Post Way, Salt Lake City, UT 84116 (801) 359-2900
Projected Price: TBA
Percent Complete: 50%

In a nutshell:

Retro-private-eye Tex Murphy dons his trench coat and fedora to uncover a sinister plot centered on the most famous of all true-life "X-Files," the mysterious UFO crash at Roswell, New Mexico.

What's so special?

As dynamic and pathbreaking as *Under a Killing Moon* proved to be, this follow-up (it's not really a sequel) features a better story, a superior cast, and perfected technology.

Why should I care?

Access has come closer than any other company to realizing the full potential of the interactive movie genre. There's a legion of Tex Murphy fans waiting on this game, and we don't think they'll be disappointed.

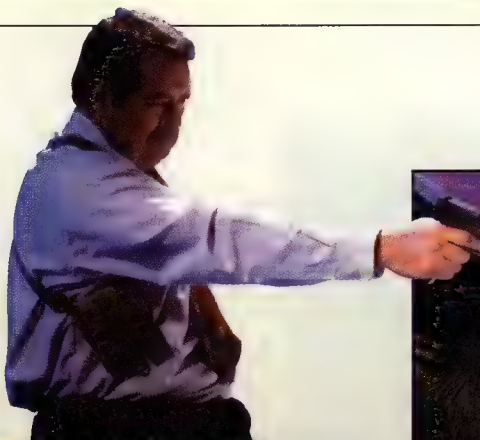
And when's it coming out?

Access says the game is right on schedule for a Christmas 1996 release.

The soundstage in Access' new building is about three times the size of the old one, but it's still pretty cramped when production is in full swing: power cables; camera booms; microphones; great, fearsomely hot lights; bundles of wires held up by bungee cords; chairs; props; ice chests; and a snack table so buried beneath bags of Ding-Dongs, Cheese Doodles, bean dip, and Twinkies that it looks like the central collection depot of Junk Food for UNICEF.

All around, the unsung heroes of the production are handling their all-important tasks with quietly intense aplomb: Dave Brown, video director; Jon Clark, lighting and sound director; Brad Henrie and George Maousakis, boom operators; and Mark Hula, cinematographer. Art Director Neil Galloway — the artist chiefly responsible for all those moody alleys and lush interiors — works in a small room off to the side, manning the teleprompter and the electronic slate.

It's four in the afternoon, and shooting has been going on since eight in the morning. Working against the bluescreen, Chris Jones and veteran actor Kevin McCarthy are doing retakes of one of the game's climactic scenes. McCarthy is not a young man (his film



Barry Corbin (Maurice on TV's "Northern Exposure") wields that Glock pistol as though he means business. Corbin seemed to relish the chance to play the heavy.

while Murphy — in a truly spectacular sequence — manages one of his customary hairbreadth escapes.

Before he bit the dust, Malloy managed to send out a number of mysterious "Pandora Boxes" to trusted associates; once Murphy locates the boxes and figures out how to open them, he initiates a holographic message from Malloy that mobilizes Tex, Fitzpatrick, and some other Good Guys to uncover the UFO conspiracy and thwart an impending global catastrophe.

Stalking Murphy at every turn is a menacing NSA agent (played to perfection by Barry Corbin, best known for his role as Maurice, the crusty ex-astronaut, on "Northern Exposure"), and tempting him along the way is a luscious and very available *femme fatale* played by former Charlie's Angel Tanya Roberts (*Beast Master* and *Sheena, Queen of the Jungle*).

The script is a vast improvement over the one for *Under A Killing Moon*: darker, tighter, sharper in its characterizations, and peppered with (mostly) funnier gags. Writer Aaron Conners asserts that he really paid attention to the negative criticisms leveled at the earlier game and planned this new script accordingly.

"We were cutting our teeth on *Killing Moon*," he told me during a break in the shooting, "and sometimes it showed. We were in uncharted territory; it was fun, it was challenging, and it was also a nightmare. We had no real



The Fuchsia Flamingo is described in the script as "a sincere but tacky nightclub." Looks like Art Director Neil Galloway pegged it.

idea of how big a story we could manage, for one thing, so we were constantly chopping stuff out and smoothing over the seams.

"This time, we started the project knowing precisely what we could work with: a set number of characters, a set number of locations, and a definite cast in mind. One problem with *UKM*, as some reviewers were quick to point out, was that the main story took too long to get cracking. We did that on purpose, so that the player could get used to the interactive system before plunging in. But this time, we hit them with the main plot right from the opening scene in the Brew and Stew cafe."

Another common complaint about *UKM* was that the player never could manage to arrange a date between Tex and the sexy mutant woman Chelsea, despite her obvious interest. In this

game, if the player successfully follows an admittedly tricky and delicate path, Tex can end up with Chelsea, in what promises to be a fairly steamy finale.

In fact, one of the strongest threads through the story is the erotic tug-of-war between the radiant, rather angelic Chelsea character (who is possessed of unspecified but highly intriguing mutant sexual abilities), and the Tanya Roberts seductress, who is dark, dangerous, and alluring. They both want Tex — for some reason.

The main "path" through the game, the so-called "B Path," will be very similar to the main path of *Killing Moon*. The hard-to-follow "A Path" will lead to a happy union with Chelsea. And there's something new to this game: a "C Path" that positions Tex on the Dark Side and permits the player, if he or she desires, to experience a fairly grim, nihilistic adventure.

Some of the perceived unevenness of Chris Jones' performance in *Killing Moon* was attributable to the stress of his triple role in the production: directing and co-authoring as well as acting the lead. This time, Jones is free to concentrate on *being* Tex, and he really inhabits the role.

"Honestly," said director Adrian Carr, "I was a little worried about how Chris would play in the company of experienced Hollywood veterans, but the guy turned out to be a natural actor. He's phenomenally good; this time out, he's not distracted by also having to direct, solve unprecedented technical problems, and do re-writes. He's lived the part of Tex Murphy for a long time, and there's a certain ease and flow to his delivery now that was present only intermittently in the earlier movie."

Men in Black

Tex confronts Malloy and learns a little of the truth about the Roswell incident. But, wouldn't you know it? Just as Malloy is about to reveal the secret of the alien hieroglyphs, one of those sinister Men in Black appears and blows him away.



Carr is a protégé of the brilliant Australian director Fred Schepisi and comes to directing from 23 years' experience as an editor (his first big editing job was on *The Man From Snowy River*; he also edited-down four days' worth of chaotic footage to create the spectacular cavalry charge in *The Lighthorsemen*, and he was second-unit director on the hugely entertaining *Quigley Down Under*). Long before shooting began, he dissected the triple-layered narrative with his own storyboards, and his intense previzualization of scenes enables him to shoot out-of-sequence with perfect confidence.

"This is very different from a conventional shoot," he remarks, during a brief time-out to change the lighting set-up. "On a modular set like this, you can go anywhere you like within the digital realm, as if you were behind a phantom camera."

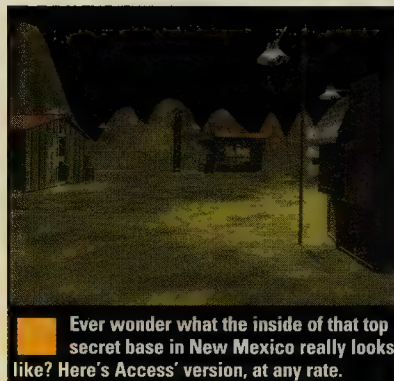
"The hardest part is to keep the continuity flowing, because if you put an actor in the wrong place, he could end up in the finished frame standing in the middle of a digital oil barrel."

"The shots we're doing now are tricky — I have to integrate Chris and Kevin perfectly with the already-taped images of Tanya Roberts and Barry Corbin, so that in the finished scene, you'll never guess that they were not all here on the set at the same time."

I ask Adrian how he got interested in this multimedia game project, and why he elected to come to Salt Lake City rather than stay with the more



Inside the legendary UFO hangar (note scorch marks on the walls from a recent shootout with the bad guys).



Ever wonder what the inside of that top secret base in New Mexico really looks like? Here's Access' version, at any rate.

lucrative offers in Hollywood.

"Simply put, my professional curiosity was piqued," he said. "I read the script, saw all the different paths and how each action had this fascinating 'ripple' effect on subsequent

actions, and I liked the challenge of it. I'd had all this editing experience, which gave me the flexibility to shoot what is, in effect, three movies in one, and some experience working in a blue-screen environment, so I thought I could handle the technical problems. What clinched it for me was the quality of the cast: the chance to direct actors like these was something I could not pass up."

By day's end, thanks to the lack of a physical set and props and the simple, stable lighting set-ups, Adrian has smoothly and energetically directed his dedicated troops through about sixty scenes,

comprising fifteen pages of dialog, which is a phenomenal amount of progress by any standard.

After two days of observing this cast and crew at work, I can testify that the amiable-but-shaggy quality of *Killing Moon* has been supplanted by total professionalism. This production boasts a compelling story, a tight, punchy script, and some of the best acting yet seen in any interactive movie.

Carr has no doubts that this project will set a new standard: "Access may be a little-known company to the entertainment world at large now," he said with utter conviction, "but they won't be when this comes out."

If all goes well in the post-production phases, expect to see this new Tex Murphy adventure in the stores by Christmas. On six CDs, no less.

PCG

"They're Coming! They're Coming!"

A brief interview with Kevin McCarthy

If there is one scene that has become a paradigm of the whole 1950's sci-fi genre, it's the harrowing finale of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, where a disheveled Kevin McCarthy stands in the middle of a freeway, waving his arms and desperately trying to warn America that the Pod People are invading. (Where do you think Newt Gingrich came from?) The film scared the bejezus out of me when I saw it at age thirteen, and it has become recognized as one of the true classics of its genre.

Kevin McCarthy's long and distinguished career encompasses not only genre films, but extensive Broadway experience (for more than ten years, he has been captivating audiences with his tour-de-force portrayal of Harry Truman in the touring stage production of *Give 'em Hell, Harry*). He was nominated for an Oscar in 1951 for his superb portrayal of Frederick March's son in *Death of a Salesman*.

A dapper gentleman with a puckish sense of humor, McCarthy graciously took time out from his busy schedule for a quick interview with PC

Gamer. Here are some brief excerpts:

PCG: How do you like this whole "interactive movie" experience?

KM: It's interesting and challenging. I've never done anything like it before, of course. And at first it was off-putting, working in the Great Blue Void... but actors often have to call on their imaginations, and all the plays I did on the Broadway were rehearsed on similarly bare stages — because the union charges you a fortune to move real props and furniture!

But I've learned to relax and roll with it; I'm ready to uncork and be as natural as I can. Basically, I'm having a swell time. The biggest challenge is the leap of imagination required to play scenes with actors who are not physically present on the set, even though you can see them on the monitor! That was disconcerting at first,



McCarthy

because even the slightest wrong movement could have you materializing inside a piece of furniture.

PCG: You seem to get along well with

Adrian Carr...

KM: Indeed. I like working with this director very much, and I think he's very gifted. His editing background is a great plus, because editors know so much about the camera. Some of the best directors I ever worked with — Billy Wilder, George Stevens — they also came out of editing, and that was one of the secrets of their art.

PCG: What opinion have you formed about the future of the interactive medium?

KM: The creative possibilities of this new medium seem boundless. I remember many a discussion during past productions when someone would bring up a wonderful possibility to add to a movie, and it would get shot down for technical reasons: "Oh, we can't do that." But now, with this technology, if you can visualize it, by God, you can do it! I find that very exciting.

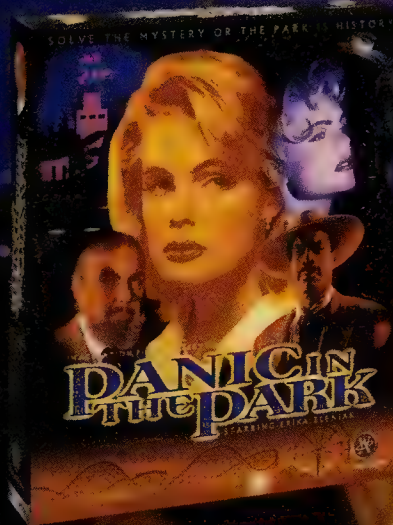
If the medium has a limitation, it might be in the field of serious, realistic drama. But even there, you wordsmiths will probably discover ways to do things that nobody's thought of yet. Tell me: Aren't you challenged by that?



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Product Information Number 146

The War College

The *Universal Military Simulator* is Born Again

Lots of wargames give you the chance to be a famous general. *The War College* lets you assume four roles; sort of the wargaming equivalent of The Three Tenors.

—William R. Trotter

F.Y.I. FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Game: *The War College*
Developer: Intergalactic Development, Inc.
Publisher: GameTek, Inc., 2999 Northeast 191st St.,
Aventura, FL (305) 932-8651
Projected Price: TBA
Percent Complete: 75%

In a nutshell:

It's a state-of-the-art battle simulator, featuring 3D, solid-modeled, fully rotating terrain maps and real-time combat.

What's so special?

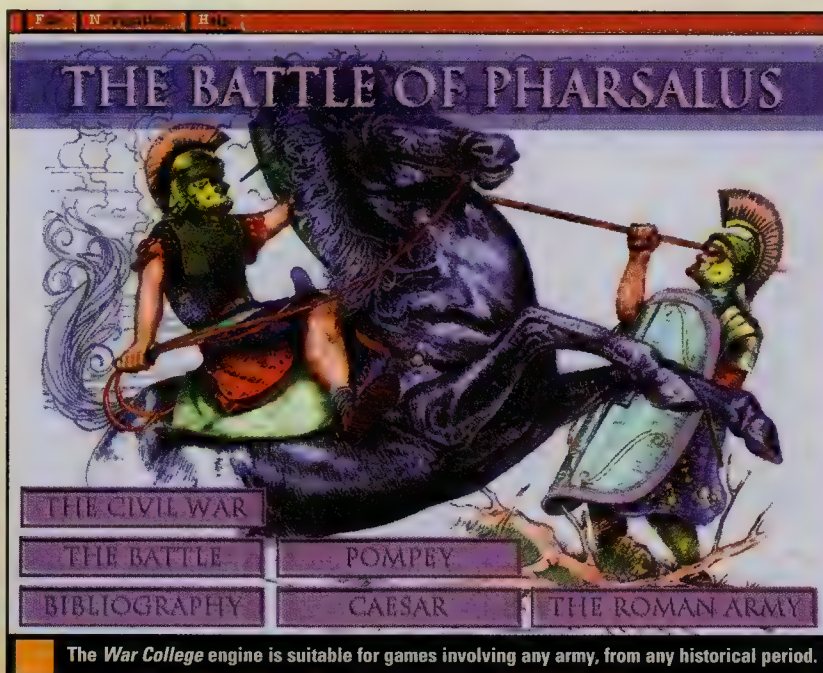
As the direct descendant of the original *Universal Military Simulator*, this game has an especially distinguished pedigree — it's a mature, thoughtful, and extremely good-looking program.

Why should I care?

This game's historical range is vast and allows you to explore tactical possibilities from the age of the Roman legions to the great tank battles of the Eastern Front in WWII. This feature alone should make it a desirable addition to any wargamer's library.

And when's it coming out?

Third quarter, this year.



The original *Universal Military Simulator* (UMS for short) was not much to look at, by today's standards, when it came out in 1987. It was all black and white — except for a couple of rancid CGA title screens — and its terrain maps were nothing but wire-frame grids. The interface was a yo-heave-ho! affair that required your fingers to dance over the keys like a pianist trying to hammer out a Chopin mazurka, and the units were floating icons tethered to the field by arrows — so many of them, in the larger battles, that at first glance the screen looked like a deck of cards stood on end.

And yet, the game under the hood was, for its time, unprecedented in its power. It also sported a feature that has since become common-place, but was at the time considered fairly revolutionary: the game allowed you to go inside the program and modify existing units, or create new ones, then save these custom

variants as separate game files.

I have a great fondness for the original UMS; it was, in fact, the first computer wargame I ever played, and for all its primitive graphics and vexatious interface, it really sucked you into the battles in that "just one more turn, dammit!" way that only the best games can manage.

Ezra Sidran, founder of Intergalactic Development and designer of the original UMS, considers *The War College* to be his magnum opus.

"This is, finally, the wargame I fantasized about creating back in 1987," Sidran said during a recent interview. "The technology has caught up with my original vision, and is allowing me to design the game I've always wanted to see. In a very real sense, this is the wargame of my dreams."

To judge from the Beta version I've been looking at, *The War College* (which could really be titled *UMS-III*) could be that for a lot of players. The rotating terrain maps are beautiful, the byzantine interface of old has been replaced with a

smooth point-and-click system of pull-down menus, and the extra space on the CD-ROM has been used to provide excellent reference material on tactics, weapons, and leaders.

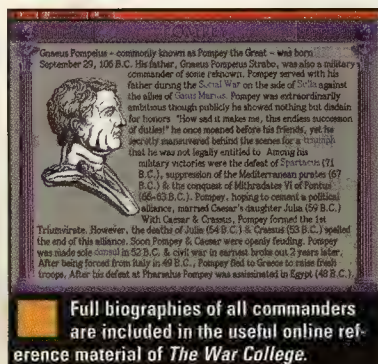
The basic package comes with five preloaded scenarios: Pharsalus (Caesar vs. Pompey), Austerlitz (Napoleon), Antietam (American Civil War), Tannenberg (Russians vs. Germans in 1914), and an as-yet-undetermined Eastern Front tank battle.

Numerous expansion discs are planned, enabling the gamer to pick and choose from every historical era, all the way back to the Battle of Kadesh (Hittites vs. the Egyptian army of Ramses II, 13th Century B.C.).

Units will be represented by 3D "lines of battle" rendered in three different scales. On the closest zoom, you can give orders to individual brigades, legions, what-have-you (depending on the historical period), and deploy them in any formation suitable for the time period of the battle being fought. The more distant views are used to give orders to larger formations.

When you click on a unit, a box opens containing full information on its current status: morale, efficiency, ammo, casualties — everything relevant. Another click lets you specify its formation — line, column, square, wedge, whatever you think the situation calls for — and then you watch what happens. Graphic blandishments will include rolling clouds of smoke from volley-fire, and arcing shells from the cannon.

No hex-based system is used to control movement and combat, although the conventional zones of control are still present, as indeed they have to be. All calculations governing movement and distance are mathematically precise, and battle results are determined by 14 different calculations — all of which can be



modified by the user to test out "what-if?" theories. Combat results can be printed out for later reference and for ease of play in multi-player games, since network play is also available.

GameTek also promises that the game's artificial intelligence will be "superior" to that found in most other wargames. Since the Beta version I tested lacked any actual combat sequences, I can only take their word for it, but it should be noted that the AI in the original UMS was pretty darn good.

With its handsome graphics, superior interface, and first-rate online reference material, *The War College* looks like an ideal sequel, one that fulfills all the promise of its antediluvian ancestor.

Welcome back, UMS; we've missed you.

PCG



On the train that carried them east von Hindenburg & Ludendorff decided that the 8th Army must immediately stop its retreat, swing south & destroy the Russian 2nd Army before the 1st Army could close in on their northern flank. Samsonov pushed his army to the northwest pursuing, what Russian HQ had assured him, was a retreating 8th Army.

Last Event

Next Event

Tannenberg makes a fascinating simulation, if only because the average wargamer could hardly do worse than the incompetent Russian generals, Rennenkampf and Samsonov. There's plenty of chances to change history here.

What's on the menu, General?

Here's a run-down on the battles included in the basic game:

Battle of Pharsalus, August 9, 48 B.C.; Caesar vs. Pompey

With numerically inferior forces, Caesar lured Pompey down from his strong defensive position in the mountains, then baited him into an attack by advancing the legions to within 150 yards of Pompey's line. As Caesar had hoped, Pompey launched a rash cavalry attack, which Caesar crushed with 8 reserve legions.

Enveloping Pompey's left — now unprotected by the retreating cavalry — Caesar rolled up the enemy line with a massed attack of his veteran infantry. Pompey's army disintegrated and Pompey himself fled in disgrace. He did not stop running until he reached Alexandria, Egypt.

Battle of Austerlitz, Dec. 1, 1805; Napoleon vs. allied Austrian and Russian armies

Faking a retreat, Napoleon suckered the Allied armies into a premature advance that disorganized their formations; he then turned and struck them with a massive coordinated assault. Hemmed in by the terrain, the reeling Allied forces were forced to retreat over a frozen lake, where the weight of their cannon broke the ice, causing panic and heavy casualties. One-third of the Allied force, some 16,000 men, were lost, and Napoleon's ascent to power was guaranteed.

Battle of Antietam, Sept. 17, 1862; Lee vs. McLellan

Keeping up momentum following his success at the 2nd Battle of Bull Run, Lee decided to invade Maryland, hoping to gather recruits from Confederate sympathizers (of which, it turned out, there were very few). Eluding Union pickets, Lee struck deep, sending Jackson to surround and capture the arsenal at Harper's Ferry and generating great fear that he might attack Baltimore.

The chance discovery by Union scouts of Lee's complete orders for the campaign gave McLellan a golden chance to destroy the Confederate army in detail, but, as usual, McLellan's habitual slowness prevented that. Lee had but a single day's breathing space to organize for battle, but that was enough.

Both armies collided near Sharpsburg, separated by Antietam Creek, and from 7:30 in the morning until late afternoon, they hammered each other in a series of brutal, back-and-forth attacks. Tactically, the battle was a draw (both sides lost about 12,000 men, making this the single bloodiest day in American military history), but Lee's Maryland campaign was effectively ruined.

Battle of Tannenberg, August 26, 1914; von Hindenburg and the German 8th Army vs. Rennenkampf and Samsonov, Russian 1st and 2nd Armies, respectively

In the famous Schlieffen Plan, the German general staff assumed that it would take 30 days for the "Russian steamroller" to mobilize, by which time, it was hoped, France would be defeated and troops could be transferred to the Eastern Front.

But the Tsarist forces moved much more quickly, and by August 24, they had pushed the Germans back. Only a single German force, the 8th Army, blocked the way to Berlin.

But with rare incompetence, the two Russian generals seemed to be conducting two separate campaigns. The gap between their forces was so great that Hindenburg was able to mass his entire strength against the Russian 2nd Army and crush it, with no interference from the distant and aloof Rennenkampf.

Rarely in modern warfare has there been such a one-sided defeat. At the cost of only 12,500 casualties, Hindenburg's forces killed or captured 145,000 Russian troops, along with 200 guns.

Tannenberg presents the wargamer with exciting possibilities, if only because the Russian commanders were such blockheads that it would not take much expertise to improve on their performance.

Fade to Black

Vive la difference!

France-based Delphine Software thumbs its nose at the first-person action craze — and the results are unlike anything you've seen before.

—Steve Poole

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Game: *Fade to Black*
Developer: Delphine Software
Publisher: Electronic Arts, 1450 Fashion Island
Boulevard, San Mateo, CA 94404-2064 (415) 571-7171
Projected Price: \$45-\$65
Percent Complete: 60%

In a nutshell:

Fade to Black is the sequel to *Flashback*, the award-winning action adventure that was a hit on both the PC and on various videogame systems.

What's so special?

Delphine Software has gussied up those great *Flashback* features with brand-new 3D technology. Instead of the first-person perspective that's all the rage now, Delphine has created an adjustable "chase" camera perspective, and the result is a game that looks and plays like no other.

Why should I care?

Because this is more than a great-looking actionfest — there are some pretty devious puzzles facing you here, too. Add some powerful cut scenes and a top musical score, and you've got the makings of a real hit.

And when's it coming out?

September 1995



Hart has more to worry about than the Morphs. Just as in *Flashback*, even the slightest misstep can prove fatal.

It's the never-ending dream of game developers: To create a product that has all the inter-action gamers crave, but that also uses cinematic elements to add the qualities of drama, suspense, character development, and plot twists that make movies such a gripping form of entertainment.

The French seem to have found the key to achieving this tricky hybrid. *Out of this World*, the *Alone in the Dark* games, *Creature Shock*, *Dragon Lore* — all produced by French design teams — are perfect examples. They boast plenty of action, a healthy dose of puzzles, and enough movie-style elements to further the plot and keep things moving along at a good clip.

In fact, one of my favorite games, *Flashback*, was a French import, developed by Delphine Software. It combination of white-knuckled action, clever puzzles, and a twisting and turning sci-fi plot that was part *Total Recall* and part *They Live* made it a commercial and critical success. It was also a real technological achievement — the animation of the main character ran at an eye-popping 24 frames per second.

Now Delphine Software has signed an exclusive distribution and publishing agreement with Electronic Arts, and is busy at work on *Fade to Black*, the sequel to *Flashback*. I've been playing an alpha version, and I can honestly say I've never seen a game that looked, played, or felt like this one.

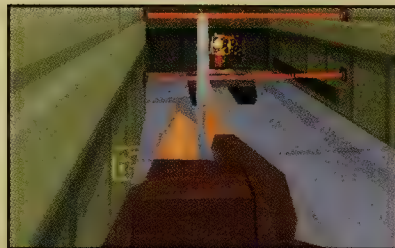
Fade to Black picks up precisely where *Flashback* left off. In the first

game, scientist Conrad Hart uncovers a plot by extraterrestrials to take over Earth by disguising themselves as humans. After blasting his way through countless aliens intent on silencing him, Hart found a spaceship and took off just after detonating a nuclear reactor on the aliens' home world. Once he was safely away from the planet, he put himself into cryogenic sleep, with no idea of when, where, or even if he would be rescued.

In the opening sequence of *Fade to Black*, we see Conrad's ship grabbed by a tractor beam from a huge space vessel — one that bears an unsettling resemblance to the buildings he's just escaped. He's awakened by a voice coming from a wall monitor, and as he looks up, we become aware that Hart's adventures are far from over. A Morph — a race able to assume a variety of shapes at will, and the same creatures Hart just escaped from — informs him he's a prisoner on New Alcatraz, and that escape is hopeless. But even as the Morph utters these words, you see a pistol enter into the picture on the monitor, and then a spray of blood and flesh as the Morph's head is blown off.

Hart's savior left a pistol and communications device in Hart's cell the night before. Beginning with only these two items, Hart must find a way to escape his captors — and, though he doesn't know it yet, save the human race from extinction.

"Like in *Flashback*, you start *Fade to Black* unsure of who you are or what you need to do," says Matt Wolf, the game's assistant producer. "But as you explore the game world, you meet new characters who give you insight into the storyline." These scenes are portrayed in the



The chase camera in *Fade to Black* allows you to see your character fighting his way to freedom, something that you're never show in most first-person action games.



He looks peaceful enough now, but there's no telling what might bring this Golem-like creature to life. Once he does start moving, though, you can bet that he'll blame Hart for disturbing him.

same sort of cinematic cutaways that were so important in giving *Flashback* its distinct movie-like feel.

"They called *Flashback* the first CD-ROM in a cart," say Wolf, "and it was really a great game. The cinematic cut scenes were very effective — but the ones you'll see in *Fade to Black* will blow you away."

Some might scoff that these cut scenes are eye candy, but they serve two vital purposes: They reveal key plot and story elements as you move through the game, and they add a strong movielike feel to the game that elevates it above your garden-variety shooter.

Another component that makes *Fade to Black* unique is its emphasis on puzzle solving. True, *Flashback* also had puzzles, but *Fade to Black* has many more inventory items you can manipulate, allowing for more complex puzzles. "I'm hesitant to call it a 'hybrid' game, but it really does encapsulate the best of both worlds," says Wolf. "It's an action game in the truest sense, in that you have a one-to-one control ratio over the main character — you run and jump on the fly, shoot, duck, etc. — but there's also a lot of problem solving. You just aren't going to progress unless you use your mind."

"Around the office we call it 'The Thinking-Man's Doom' — you're moving through mysterious hallways and passages like in a lot of the first-person hunt-and-kill games, but since it uses a 'chase-plane' view you can actually see your character performing all these actions."

Indeed, the first thing many players will notice about *Fade to Black* is that chase-plane perspective. As Hart runs down halls and moves around corners, the camera stays just above and behind him, swinging around to keep him in sight at all times. And when you pull your gun and take aim, the viewpoint zooms in to allow you to see the action from directly behind him.

It's similar to the approach fellow French developers Infogrames use in the

Alone in the Dark games, but there are two big differences. First, the viewpoint remains fairly constant, except when it swings around as Hart rounds a corner or turns in place; in the ATD games, the camera perspective switched automatically, often to one that was aesthetically pleasing but less than satisfying in terms of gameplay. Second, there'll be a feature that allows you to customize the perspective, the way many flight simulations allow you to customize your external views.

"The chase-plane view allows you to identify with your character, like in a movie," says Wolf. "A lot of the first-person games are fun, but how often do you wonder just what you look like? It's hard for the player to care about his character without that knowledge."

Players with Pentiums and PCI video cards will get to see all this 640x480 SVGA. But don't worry if you haven't upgraded your machine yet; there are two other modes, 320x200 and 320x240, that should run nicely on 486s with fast video cards. There are also options for toggling detail and Gouraud shading to pep things up, as well as a "speed limit" control. "If you're running the game on a 486/66 in VGA mode and turn the speed limit off, you'll go from 17 or 18 frames per second to around 30," Wolf says. "Right now, the SVGA runs at around 12 frames per second on a Pentium, full screen — you can decrease the viewing window incrementally — and with the speed limit off it goes to 15 frames per second."

That may not sound so hot compared to the 24 frames per second of *Flashback*, but that was a 2D game. The numbers sound more impressive when you consider that every object and creature in the game is rendered in true 3D.


Wolf says that *Fade to Black* is on track for a September release, and I believe him: another thing French developers are pretty good at is staying on schedule. Now if we can just get them to change their minds about Jerry Lewis...

PCG

Wake-up Call

In this stunning intro sequence, we learn what happened to Conrad Hart after escaping the Morphs in *Flashback*: He runs smack-dam into them again! Taking his emergency vessel aboard their mothership, they awaken Hart with the news that he's now once again a prisoner. Before he can even rub the sleep from his eyes, someone kills his captor, and tells him where to find one of his oldest and dearest friends — a pistol.

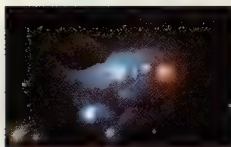




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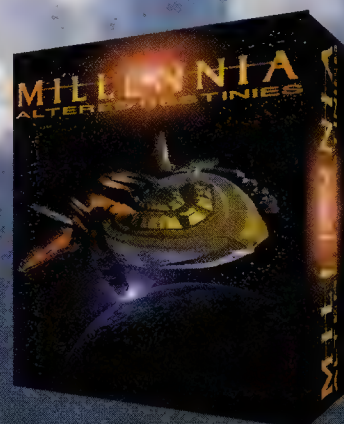
Peter Smith, Strategy Plus

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Product Information Number 106



Descent Online

GEnie, Interplay join forces to produce multi-player games

Interplay Productions has announced an agreement with GEnie Online Services to develop two games available exclusively online from GEnie for the next six months.

The first title, available in August, will be a "deluxe version" of Interplay's 3D mega-hit, *Descent*, with many new features and several options designed to capitalize on the multi-player possibilities inherent in an online service like GEnie.

"This is an excellent opportunity for us to provide our high-quality games in a unique forum," said Interplay president Brian Fargo. "GEnie has given us a chance to bring *Descent* to an even wider audience, with some very cool features."

The special GEnie version of *Descent* will feature new variations, new fighters, tournament competition, and a new level every week.

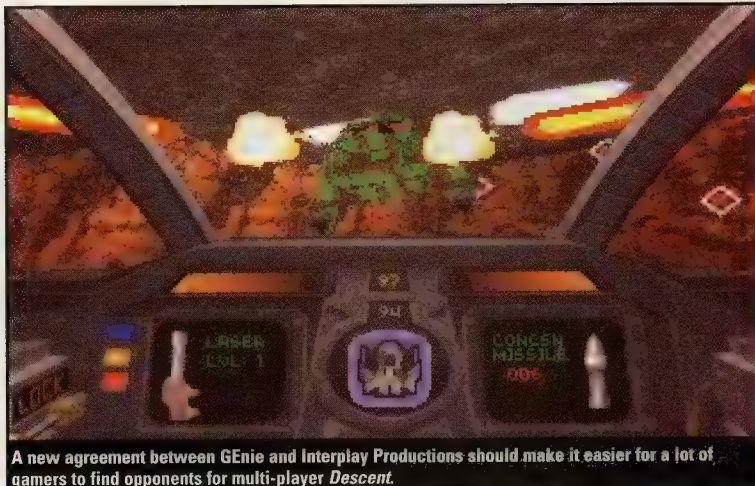
The new variations include a soccer-style game played by two four-player teams, and a "capture-the-flag" game, also using teams of players. The GEnie

version will also add two new hovercraft to the original *Descent*'s Pyro GX fighter, giving players a choice between a heavy armor/light weapons configuration or a light armor/heavy weapons setup.

Tournament play, complete with a seeding system, will be included so players can pit themselves against similarly-skilled opponents based on their gameplay record.

GEnie has an excellent track record with games; their *Air Warrior*, *Multi-Player Battletech* and *CyberStrike* games have all won industry awards for online games. GEnie's lineup also includes an online version of *Harpoon*, widely considered the best modern naval wargame ever designed.

"GEnie's commitment to showcasing the world's most innovative games has never been stronger," said Todd Lefkowitz, GEnie's director of games and entertainment. "Multiplayer *Descent* and Interplay Produc-



A new agreement between GEnie and Interplay Productions should make it easier for a lot of gamers to find opponents for multi-player *Descent*.

tions are an exciting part of that commitment."

Descent, designed for Interplay by Parallax Studios, held the No. 1 spot on the Internet's Top 100 Games list for more than four months. In the game, you pilot a hovercraft through a series of subterranean mines scattered on planets and moons throughout the solar system. The robots that service the mines have been taken over by an alien intelligence, and

it's your job to stop them. With modem and network options already included in the original game, *Descent* is a natural for online gaming.

GEnie and Interplay haven't said what the other online game specified in their agreement will be, but their fantastic pool simulation, *Virtual Pool*, which already has options for modem and network play, would probably be a safe bet.

P90 Hits the Road

Intel introduces fastest portable Pentium yet

Notebook and subnotebook PCs just got a little faster; Intel has introduced a 90MHz Pentium processor designed specifically for mobile computers.

The portable P90 uses Intel's Voltage Reduction Technology, which lets the chip run at 3.3 volts and work with off-the-shelf components while its inner core runs at a lower 2.9 volts.

The new chip also uses the SL power-management technology Intel introduced in earlier processor chips. It consumes as much as 30 percent less power than its desktop counterpart. That means it runs cooler and conserves battery life, making it perfect for today's tiny PCs.

The portable P90 also uses Intel's new Tape Carrier Package, a postage stamp-sized

package for the processor that's thinner than a dime, freeing up space so notebook manufacturers can make systems smaller or add new features.

"Mobile users can run today's advanced desktop applications on a Pentium processor notebook without compromising performance or battery life," said Stephen Nachtsheim, vice president of Intel's Mobile

Products Group.

He predicted that by the end of the year, most notebook PC makers will be offering lines composed entirely of Pentium systems, with entry-level prices ranging from \$2,000 to \$3,000.

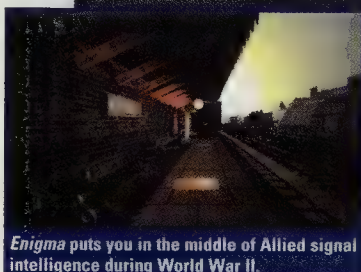
More information on the new P90 is available via the Internet on Intel's World Wide Web page; just tune your Web browser to <http://www.intel.com/>.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Our E3 cover story (beginning on page 62) covers most of the new games coming out in the near future, but the industry is always growing, and there are already products on the horizon that we didn't see at the Los Angeles expo. Here's the late-breaking news...

Enigma

Even after 55 years, Bletchley Park is still a place of mystery. As the hub of Allied signal intelligence during World War II, the quiet English country manor played host to some amazing inventions, including Colossus, the first large-scale electronic computer. It was at Bletchley Park that a device known as Enigma was used to



Enigma puts you in the middle of Allied signal intelligence during World War II.

decode Axis radio messages, often giving the Allies a critical advantage; Winston Churchill called it "the secret weapon that won the war." News Multimedia's *Enigma: Discover the Secrets of Bletchley Park* takes you back to those tense, exciting days to face the same challenges real recruits faced in 1940. You'll help win or lose the war by decoding messages, tracking German U-boats and creating deception plans. In addition to the adventure-game element, *Enigma* will have a reference mode designed to let players

..... Continued on page 39

We're World Wide

PC Gamer Web site opens to public

It had to happen. We've been dragged kicking and screaming into the Information Age. Now you can visit your buddies at *PC Gamer* on the Internet, via *PC Gamer's* new World Wide Web page.

The *PC Gamer* home page, located at <http://www.pcgamer.com>, is chock full of information about your favorite magazine. You'll always be able to find out what's in the current issue; what demos and shareware games are on our latest CD-ROM; and what wonderful features, latest scoops and hottest reviews we're working on for the next edition.

You'll also find listings of back issues and their contents, and you'll even be able to order them — or subscribe to the magazine — online.

Best of all, you'll be able to download game demos you may have missed, and you can check out the latest hints and tips in our

WinWeb - Back Issues of PC Gamer

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Get up to speed with back issues of the best game magazine around!

To understand what lies ahead, you need to know what's come before. Now you can order back issues of *PC Gamer*, complete with The CD-ROM disc packed with interactive demos for only \$9.95!

Here's a rundown on what'll you find in our earlier issues:

Vol.1, No. 7 December 1994
 Cover Feature: *Wing Commander III*
 With *Wing Commander III*, Origin has forever redefined PC gaming. Find out why this will be the hottest game of the year!

PC Gamer's World Wide Web page is your source for game demos, back issues, and news about the magazine.

online version of Strategy Central. We'll also keep our virtual home updated with the latest in bug patches, *Doom* WADs, game cheats, and walk-throughs, so you'll have an ever-growing database of wholesome gaming goodness to explore.

So come on, pay us a visit! Read Matt's Letter from the Editor, download some free software, drop us an E-note, order a back issue, or just look at the pretty pictures. Our door is always open, and we love to have guests over.

Memory-Impaired?

GameRunner offers solutions to common problems

If you've been struggling with a game that wants more memory than you can free up, if you're tired of waiting for long disk loads — or if you simply can't get past level three of your favorite action game — Quarterdeck Corporation may just have the answer to your gaming prayers.

The company's new *GameRunner* package combines three handy utilities: a Game Edition of the QEMM memory manager, Cache86 disk caching software, and AXIS - The Gamecheater.

The QEMM Game Edition is a special version of Quarterdeck's best-selling memory manager. It includes all the functionality of QEMM 7.5, minus the Windows version of Manifest, the Windows Setup program and the QuickBoot utility.

QEMM uses patented Stealth and DOS-Up technologies to free more base memory than the EMM386 program that comes with DOS can manage. Its automatic optimization program does all the thinking, looking at your system's startup configuration and determining what files can be loaded into upper memory to maximize the amount of RAM available for running games.

Owners of the *GameRunner* package can upgrade to the complete version of QEMM later if they want to have the Windows features.

Cache86 is a CD-ROM and hard-disk cache program that increases the speed at which a computer reads and writes to disk. Quarterdeck says Cache86's performance is much better than DOS's SmartDrive cache.

Rounding out the package is a pop-up program designed to help gamers beat those tough games. AXIS - The Gamecheater has special modules that let you hit a key to get more time, money, ammo, or whatever you need to beat a game that's giving you headaches.

Some games currently supported by AXIS are *Lemmings I & II*, *Populous II*, *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*, *X-Wing*, *Wing Commander*, *Civilization*, and *Dune II*. Quarterdeck says they've been talking with major game publishers, so we expect that AXIS modules for more games will be available in the near future.

GameRunner is expected to retail for less than \$50. For more information, call Quarterdeck at (310) 392-9851.

Laugh While You Learn

CD-ROM tutorial for Windows 95 also provides a good chuckle

If the thought of learning a whole new operating system sounds scary, check out the latest title from Graphix Zone, *The Improv Presents Windows 95 for the Technically Challenged*. This product's goal is to teach Windows 95 in a laid-back fashion, using comedy-laced lessons in an environment that represents the well-known Improv comedy club, based in Manhattan and L.A. The user is seated at a front row table in The Improv's show-room, and chooses lessons from the club's menu. The disc will accommodate all skill levels, from the beginning users to the most advanced users.

Budd Friedman, the Improv's founder, says, "I was the proverbial computer-phobic going into this. But I find I'm being gently nudged into the cyber-generation. I believe this CD-ROM will be great for people who want to learn how to use computers because it substitutes laughter for drudgery in the learning process."

This product is the first collaboration in a series of edutainment CD-ROMs from Graphix Zone and The Improv Comedy Club. The two groups feel like it's a good mix of two creative companies: Graphix Zone looks to have a hit on its hands with their recent title, *Bob Dylan: Highway 61 Interactive*; and The Improv Comedy Club is a well-established institution on the comedy circuit with its syndicated TV comedy show broadcast on the A&E network for the past ten years.

The Improv Presents Windows 95 for the Technically Challenged should be available in September, with a suggested retail price of \$39.95.

ABC Sports Goes Multimedia

Spectrum HoloByte and ABC sign a deal

The next football sim you play may be named "Monday Night Football." Capital Cities/ABC Multimedia Group and Spectrum HoloByte have signed an agreement to establish a joint venture company that will produce sports games for PCs and other game machines. The joint venture will be split right down the middle, with each company holding a 50 percent interest.

"ABC Sports is a leader in television sports broadcasting. This venture gives us the opportunity to translate that leadership into a new medium that can reach a different audience in new ways," says Stephen Weiswasser, president of Capital Cities/ABC Multimedia Group. Dennis Swanson, president of ABC Sports, says, "Our venture into CD-ROM and interactive games further expands our global multimedia reach. We're looking forward to combining our television production and programming expertise with the expertise of our new partner, and by doing so, to enter the fast-growing, exciting, home-based game market."

Gilman Louie, president and CEO of Spectrum HoloByte adds, "This venture with ABC will allow us to combine their programming with our interactive experience. We look forward to creating a dynamic, next-generation sports brand."

Spectrum HoloByte's MicroProse division will help oversee the development of the new games, which will use the "ABC Sports" trademark, along with "Monday Night Football" and "Wide World of Sports." There will probably be five games developed over the next two years, covering everything from football to racing.

Continued from page 38

wander the halls of Bletchley Park and learn its fascinating history. *Enigma* will be available this fall.

Microsoft Joystick

No official announcement has been made yet, but we're told that Microsoft is working on a joystick designed specifically for the Windows 95 operating system. The stick will be entirely digital to capitalize on the capabilities of Win 95's DirectInput API (Application Programming Interface), but Microsoft says it'll also be backward compatible with earlier joysticks, so it can be used with DOS and Windows 3.1 games. It's intended to be competitive with high-end sticks like the CH Flightstick Pro, and it should retail for around \$60. We'll keep you updated as Microsoft releases more info.

Riddle of the Runes

U.S. Gold's first screen saver is an intricate puzzle as well as a useful utility. While it

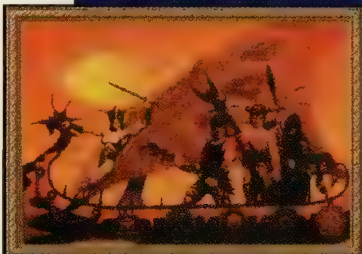
Continued on page 40

TEMPUS FUGIT

(Time flies, or my sundial is fast)



Continued from page 39



Riddle of the Runes is a screen saver based on art produced for the *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* game.

serves as a screen saver, it also challenges you to find an ancient, lost treasure chest hidden within its imagery. If that sounds like an *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* game, it's no coincidence: *Riddle of the Runes: The Worlds of TSR* uses some of the best fantasy artwork produced for the most popular AD&D game worlds, including *Forgotten Realms*, *Dragon Lance*, and *Ravenloft*. Clues to the location of the treasure are built into the pictures, so you can play a game even as your computer is idle.

TIE Fighter Collector's CD-ROM

We featured this in *Under Construction* a couple of months

.....Continued on page 43

Let the Buyer Be Net-Aware

Better Business Bureau opens Web site

Thinking about going into business for yourself? Been ripped off, and you want to complain to someone who can help? Just hit the Internet and fire up your Web browser. The Better Business Bureau has gone high-tech, setting up a home page on the World Wide Web.

"There's a great untapped demand for timely marketplace information from well-respected, unbiased organizations like the Better Business Bureau," said Jim Bast, president and CEO of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc. "Our BBB Web server is a first step in our strategic plan to utilize leading-edge technology to help respond fully and quickly to all inquiries from the public and to help resolve all marketplace complaints from consumers."

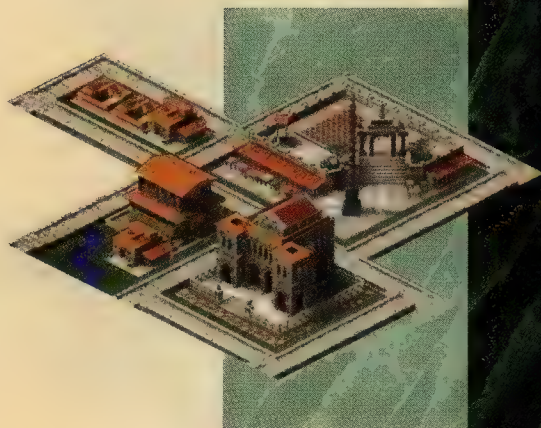
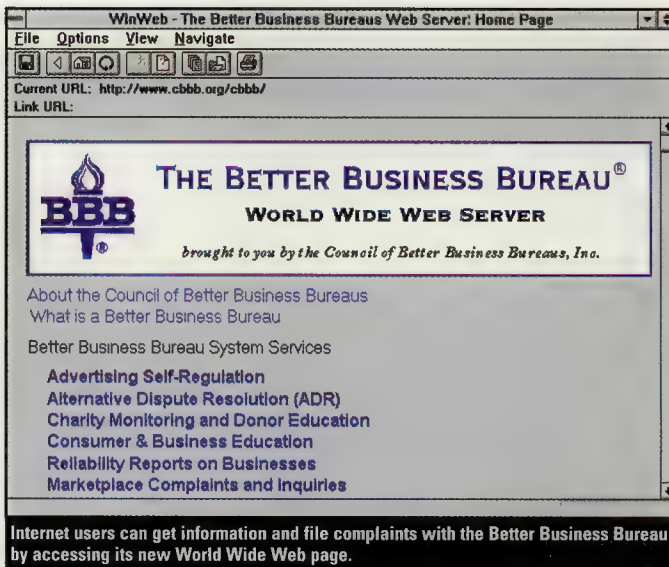
The BBB Web server offers details on Better Business Bureau services at both the local and national levels, covering information about the latest scams, a

directory of BBB offices nationwide, and copies of recent BBB press releases and publications.

The BBB home page also provides information about advertising self-regulation, evaluations of national charities, and any news of upcoming seminars and special events.

"Consumers are asking for convenient access to high-quality information they can use to make wise purchases," Bast said. "The Better Business Bureau intends to meet those demands."

The Better Business Bureau home page's Web address is <http://www.cbbb.org/cbbb/>.



VENI, VIDI, VICI.

(I came, I saw, I looked great in a toga.)

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IBM PC screenshots may vary

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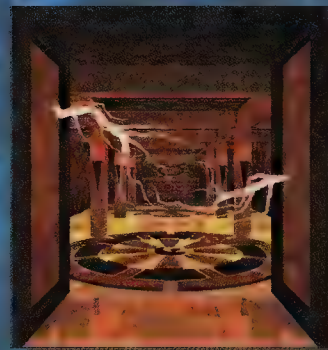
ENTOMBED is available at fine software retailers nationwide or order by phone from beaucorrm Software. A Demo Episode of ENTOMBED is available from America On-line, CompuServe and fine BBS's nationwide. To order ENTOMBED on CD, or a demo episode on 3 1/2" disk for just \$4.95 with VISA

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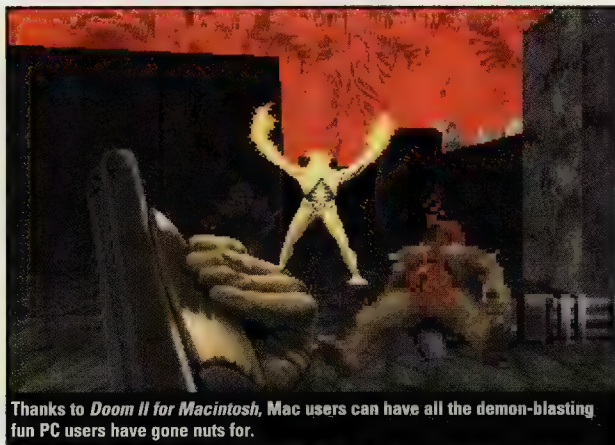
Mac Users on Highway to Hell

GT announces Macintosh version of *Doom II*

The old PC-versus-Mac debate will soon be fought with chainsaws, shotguns and rocket launchers. GT Interactive Software has announced a Macintosh version of *Doom II*—and it's network-compatible with the PC version!

"*Doom* fans have cornered me at trade shows begging for us to release *Doom II* for the Mac," said Jay Wilbur, business manager for id Software, the developers of the incredibly successful *Doom* games. "And when it comes to the rivalry between PC lovers and Mac aficionados, *Doom II* for Macintosh will certainly give players a satisfying way to help settle the score."

The Macintosh port, done by Lion Entertainment, offers the same intense, violent 3D combat as the PC version, plus options for higher-resolution graphics: in addition to standard 320x200 reso-



Thanks to *Doom II* for Macintosh, Mac users can have all the demon-blasting fun PC users have gone nuts for.

lution, the game can be played in 640x200 and 640x400 modes.

Doom II for Macintosh has flexible support for Mac-to-Mac and Mac-to-PC connections over modems and networks. Apple's Communication Toolbox supports protocols like TCP, and AppleTalk (both LocalTalk and Ethernet) for

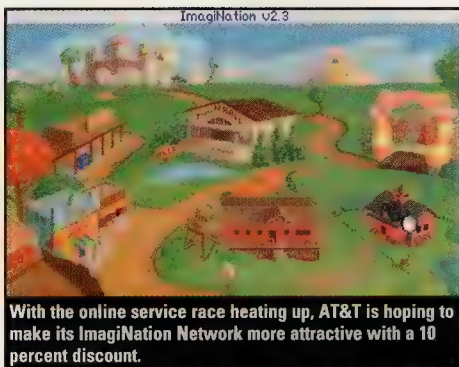
play between as many as four Macs, and MacIPX for use with the IPX or Novell networks more familiar to PC users. The Mac version also lets you use those home-made .WAD levels you find on BBSs and online services. *Doom II* for Macintosh should be available in stores as you read this.

Imagine the Savings

AT&T offers savings on entertainment network

AT&T's ImagiNation Network, an online entertainment service, is offering AT&T long-distance customers a special 10 percent discount off its monthly membership fees.

The discount comes in time to promote this summer's release of version 2.4 of the ImagiNation Network, which will introduce 10 new multi-player games to the service. The new games include *Free-For-All Red Baron*, a WWI air combat game; *Front Page Sports: Football Online*; *Team Bridge*; and six games aimed at younger customers. In addition to more than 40 games,



With the online service race heating up, AT&T is hoping to make its ImagiNation Network more attractive with a 10 percent discount.

the network offers real-time chat areas, bulletin boards and personal advertisements.

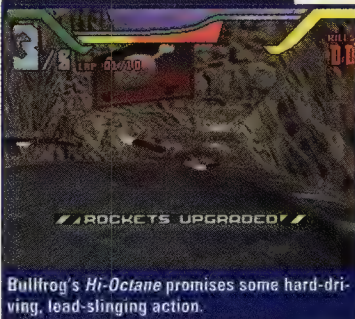
"Offering this 10 percent discount is just one of the many ways that our customers can reap the rewards of being both an AT&T

long-distance customer and an ImagiNation member," said network president and CEO Dean DeBiase. "We're giving customers a double reward."

ImagiNation Network members who provide proof that they make their long-distance calls via AT&T will have the 10 percent discount applied to their next full billing cycle. Network members who aren't AT&T long-distance customers can switch by calling (800) 336-TRUE. The promotion is valid through the rest of the year.

For information, or to join the ImagiNation Network, call (800) IMAGIN-1.

Continued from page 40.....
ago, but we've learned some exciting news: Just as LucasArts enhanced the graphics of *X-Wing* for the CD-ROM version of that game, they're dressing up *TIE Fighter*'s visuals, too. There's really only one way they could improve on *TIE*'s beautifully shaded, 3D graphics; add a Super VGA mode for higher resolution. So, naturally, that's what LucasArts is doing. Sound will be enhanced, too; more than 5,000 lines of studio-recorded dialog will go onto the disc. The *TIE* CD will also include all the missions on the *Defender of the Empire* campaign disk, plus 22 original missions and four new 3D-rendered cut scenes. Looks like LucasArts is going above and beyond the call of duty again. The *TIE Fighter Collector's CD-ROM* will be out this fall.



Bullfrog's *Hi-Octane* promises some hard-driving, lead-slinging action.

Hi-Octane

The folks at Bullfrog just don't quit. The Electronic Entertainment Expo just ended, and already the British company has announced a new game that wasn't on display at the show. *Hi-Octane* will be a futuristic, arcade-style racing game that puts you behind the wheel of a heavily armed hovercar capable of speeds exceeding 200mph. You'll need that speed and firepower if you're going to stay alive

Continued on page 44

Continued from page 43

long enough to make a name for yourself on the sled circuit, which will take you through cities, wastelands and deserts. *Hi-Octane* will feature Super VGA graphics, 3D sound, and multi-player options for as many as 12 gamer players.



Battle Beast uses feature-quality animation done by professionals from TV and movies.

Battle Beast

The creators of *Monty Python's Complete Waste of Time* are ready to release their first full-fledged game, a fighting game called *Battle Beast*.

The game features more than 8,000 frames of hand-drawn animation, digitally inked and painted by artists who've worked on episodes of "Beavis & Butt-Head" and "Ren and Stimpy." *Battle Beast's* head animator is Dan Kuenster, a key animator on the Hollywood features "The Land Before Time" and "All Dogs Go to Heaven."

Like most fighting games, *Battle Beast* challenges you to take on a series of bad guys on your way to the inevitable punch-up with the big boss. But *Battle Beast* features secret rooms where players can exchange special moves and weapons.

Battle Beast should be out in August.

PCG

Hacker Pack

Construction Kit collects, explains *Doom* tools

You've seen 'em online and on the CD-ROM we bundle with this magazine. If you're a *Doom* fan, you've probably even played some of them. And you may have wanted to try your hand at creating some yourself.

We're talking about .WAD files, of course, those little doo-dads that add new levels, sounds and graphics to everybody's favorite 3D action game. There are literally hundreds of *Doom* .WADs in circulation, so they can't be too hard to make, right?

Right — as long as you have the proper tools and a good game plan.

That's where *The Doom Construction Kit: Mastering and Modifying Doom* can help; it's a combination book and CD-ROM from The Waite Group that gives you the most popular editing programs for *Doom* and *Doom II* and guides you through the process of making your own .WADs.

All the top utilities are here: DMGRAPH, for replacing *Doom's* graphics and texture maps with

your own; the Doom Editing Utility (DEU), which lets you map brand-new levels; DMAUD and DMMUS, tools for editing the sound and music; and DEHACKED, the handiest program for changing parameters like firepower.

More importantly, there's an illustrated, 300-page manual that explains just how you go



about designing new levels and using the editing programs to turn your dream into a *Doom* player's worst nightmare.

The book opens with a discussion of *Doom's* history and a brief "Battle Guide" designed to help novices get through the unmodified versions of *Doom* and *Doom II* — after all, you can't design a really good .WAD file until you've become one with all of the games' twists and turns.

After that, the fun really begins, with basic and advanced chapters on both DEU and DEHACKED, sections on editing graphics and music, and chapters on the finer points of level design. By the time

you finish the book, you'll be more than ready to create great new .WAD files on your own.

Also included on *The Doom Construction Kit* CD-ROM are 100 new, ready-made *Doom* levels you can play or edit and, as a bonus, shareware versions of three other 3D shoot-'em-ups: *Rise of the Triad*, *Body Count*, and *Corridor 7*.

The PC Gamer Playlist

We had a blast in L.A. at the Electronic Entertainment Expo, checking out all the new games that are just around the corner. But the problem with trade shows is that you can't take the games with you when you go. Origin's *CyberMage* was a lot of fun, and we kept going back to the Blizzard booth for another look at *Warcraft II*, but we won't get to play them here in PC Gamer-land for a while yet.

Thank goodness we've got some good games to tide us over until the new ones come out. And frankly, as we staggered through the Ameri-

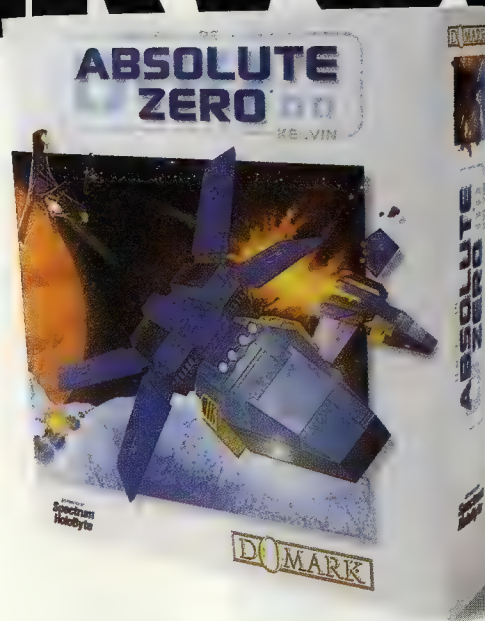
can terminal at LAX and fell into our seats on the shuttle back to San Francisco International, there were a handful of games we actually looked forward to getting back to. After all, we'd hardly had a chance to look at *Full Throttle* before we left for L.A., and meeting the real Perfect General at the QQP booth (a distinguished-looking gentleman in a silver Army helmet) made us anxious to play the game named after him.

It didn't take us too long to get back in the gaming swing of things around here. Here are the games we've

been wearing out this month:

1. *Full Throttle*/Todd, Dan, Michael, Dean
2. *Virtual Pool*/Matt, Joe, Todd, Carol
3. *Dark Forces*/Todd, Dean, Lisa, Dan
4. *Flight Unlimited*/Matt, Carol, Michael
5. *Jagged Alliance*/Bill, Dan
6. *Slipstream 5000*/Dan, Matt, Todd
7. *The Perfect General II*/Joe, Bill, Todd
8. *Star Trek: TNG: A Final Unity*/Dan, Carol
9. *Magic Carpet*/Dan, Dean, Lisa, Joe's wife Beth
10. *X-COM: Terror from the Deep*/Joe, Matt, Todd

EVEN SPOCK WOULD BE NERVOUS.



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WINDOWS 95

THE NEW FACE OF GAMING

For gamers, it's more than a new operating system. Windows 95 represents an unheard-of collaboration between top game developers, hardware manufacturers, and the considerable resources of the Microsoft machine, all working toward a common goal:

better *FASTER*
easier
PC GAMING.

by Tim Victor & Matt Firme



It's all too easy to wish bad luck on Microsoft. Its chairman, Bill Gates, is sometimes described as a nerdy boy genius, sometimes as a ruthless tycoon out to dictate the way the world does its computing. He's the richest man in America — a distinction that doesn't engender charitable well-wishing in most people.

Then there's Microsoft's previous track-record in the Disk Operating System department — namely, our old friends DOS and Windows 3.1. With its overwhelming jumble of base-memory problems, CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT editing, and archaic text-based commands, DOS has probably done more to scare new computer users away from the world of PC gaming than all the bad games ever created.

You know those Apple commercials, where a couple of business men sit in a diner trying to figure out how to reconfigure a laptop PC? They're effective, because they're so close to the truth. Who knows how many more PCs there might be in homes today — and how many more people might now know the joy of PC gaming — if only there had been a better operating system than DOS?

Microsoft's answer to DOS anxiety was Windows, culminating in Windows 3.11 for Workgroups. But while Windows has proven itself a capable operating system for handling applications such as spreadsheets and word processors, it's been an abysmal game platform — primarily because Microsoft was *only* concerned that it be a good apps platform, ignoring the needs of gamers and game developers almost entirely.

Now comes Windows 95 — and suddenly, Microsoft claims to have seen the light, and says that it realizes the importance of the game market and is ready to support it. And considering their years of designing great PC games *despite* DOS and Windows, it would be easy to understand why the development community would roll its collective eyes, mumbling "yeah, right. Tell us another one." It would hardly be a surprise to see the game designers turn their backs, preferring to keep working around the known problems of DOS than start dealing with a whole suite of new ones.

But that's not going to happen. Despite what a few naysayers might think, Windows 95 is going to be the platform of choice for new game development within a year of its August 24th release, if not sooner. Just about every publisher in gaming is gearing up to support it — including Origin, Mindscape, Activision, Spectrum HoloByte, Papyrus, Electronic Arts, Sierra, Virgin, and many more. There'll be stragglers, but not many. Because this time, Microsoft really has listened.

You Have to Want to Change

We'll get into exactly what Windows 95 is — and the specific technologies that'll make it such a good gaming platform — in due course. But one of the most interesting things about Windows 95

has been its evolution, and particularly the decision to produce an all-out game Software Development Kit — first code-named Manhattan, and now the full-fledged Game SDK — in collaboration with some of the biggest software designers and hardware manufacturers in PC gaming.

Windows 95 — a.k.a. Chicago, or Windows 4.0 — was originally slated to ship well over a year ago. But when it was presented to the industry in 1994, most felt the system still had a long way to go. By some reports, it was just barely an improvement over Windows 3.1, and not at all the generational leap many were expecting. Among those most disappointed were the few game developers attending that roll-out.

Mindscape's staff scientist David Petchey had high hopes for this new Windows. Mindscape had already decided that it could reach a larger market with Windows games, if for no other reason than that Windows games are less likely to intimidate new users than DOS games. But to do the kind of games they wanted to do, Petchey and the other programmers at Mindscape had invested months in finding ways to work around 3.1's clumsy video and sound capabilities.

Petchey was hopeful that the new Windows would make game design much easier, and result in better performance than was possible under 3.1. But when the new operating system was rolled out, Petchey and most other attendees were surprised. "We were very dismayed, because the program Microsoft was presenting us just wasn't that much different than 3.1 anyway. They'd fixed some things, but pretty much everything was the same when it came to using the graphics system and the sound system. We complained bitterly."

The hardware vendors attending the show were also unimpressed. Like the game developers, they knew that com-

But Can it Handle NASCAR Racing?

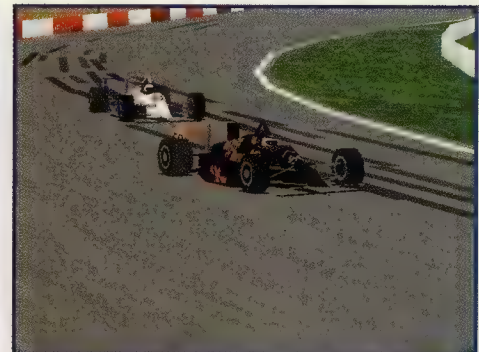
"The thing about Windows is that it's just not a very good environment for real-time applications, something where you have a lot of interrupt handling and critical timing. There were a lot of things Microsoft just didn't think about when they were doing Windows 3.1 — like joystick support. But it looks like, with Windows 95, Microsoft has really been trying to make an upgrade to Windows that will allow platform-independent game development in the same way Windows 3.1 allowed independent business and productivity development. And from what we've seen, it looks like we should be able to do pretty hot products under Windows 95."

— Dave Kaemmer, vice president & chief technology officer, Papyrus

puter gaming was the key to tapping into the home market — and that if new computer users had an operating system that would allow for games at least as complex and graphically appealing as were possible under DOS, but without all of the headaches of DOS installation, the market would increase dramatically.

And to help them find new ways to differentiate their individual product lines, the hardware designers were hoping for an operating system that would let game developers take advantage of their video and sound boards' special features — something Windows 3.1 simply would not allow. But the new Windows didn't look like it would solve those problems.

"A few months after that," Petchey says, "the hardware guys approached us (the game guys), asking 'What can we do to get you to use the special features on our boards?' And that's sort of when the



Papyrus' incredibly realistic racing sims, *IndyCar Racing* and *NASCAR Racing*, typify the kind of realism and depth you can only find in PC games; they're also the type of high-end products that simply couldn't be attempted under good old Windows 3.1. But *IndyCar Racing 2.0* — shown here, in its considerable glory — will be a Windows 95 game. It promises all the SVGA detail of *NASCAR Racing*, and should run just as well under Windows 95 as *NASCAR Racing* does under DOS. If not better...

whole thing began fermenting, going back and forth with the hardware guys and designers like us, EA, Origin, and others.

"We agreed to start fooling around with a demo program for ATI," Petchey continues, "which showed that you could actually get to the video RAM, in a window, going straight to the hardware by bypassing the Windows code. Then ATI began taking those demos up to Microsoft, and they started getting a little nervous."

Around August of last year, the soft-

Why Should Gamers Adopt Windows 95?

"It's simple. They don't have an option. It's the inevitable flow of progress. Before long, the games are *all* going to be running under Win 95. The applications will *all* be Win 95. They're not going to have an option, so they'd better just learn to love the bomb."

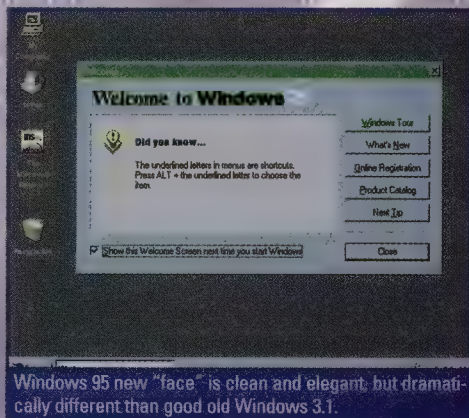
— Zack Simpson, director of technology, Origin Systems

your HANDS-ON guide to 95

by Charles Brannon

There's more to Windows 95 than gaming. It's a brand new disk operating system, with new features, a new look and feel, and new abilities. For the majority of us, it'll be the way we do everything on our PCs, from accounting to net-surfing. We'll use Windows 95 to bring our work home (or work at home), pursue our hobbies and interests, communicate online with people worldwide, and educate ourselves and our kids.

For some people, the new look of Windows 95 will come as a bit of a surprise — especially DOS users, who're used to jumping into Windows only when they have to use Windows applications. Although Windows 95 still starts your computer using a special version of "DOS 7," it lingers only long enough



Windows 95 new "face" is clean and elegant, but dramatically different than good old Windows 3.1.

to load any legacy (read: old-fashioned) device drivers and TSRs ("terminate and stay resident" utilities) that you may still require. All of this is usually hidden behind the new Windows "splash" screen, so you don't have to stare at incomprehensible DOS gobbledygook at bootup (you can press Esc to reveal these sordid details, if you wish).

Newly GUI

What does Windows 95 mean for intensive Windows users? To them, the transition may be almost jarring. Gone are the familiar (if frustratingly obtuse) Program Manager and File Manager. Instead, you have a desktop that's a lot like Norton Desktop or the Apple Macintosh Finder, replete with desktop icons and file folders. No longer will new users try in vain to figure out where to click

Proof of Performance

Look at a game like Accolade's *Super Bubsy*. Running under 3.1 and doing it the traditional way — with WinG — we tied up the CPU virtually 100% of the time, and we were getting about 9 frames per second. And that was on a Pentium 60. If we move to *Bubsy* running under Windows 95, on a 486DX2/66, using the ATI mach 64 chip, we still have about 40% of the processor free in even the un-optimized version of the game. And we're getting around 50 fps on a 486. On a P90, we can get 72 frames per second, with something like 20% CPU utilization. So that means the CPU is free to do other things, which just adds to the potential richness of the game."

— Henry Quan, vice president,
Marketing, ATI Technologies

ware and hardware interests formed the PC Games Consortium. This group agreed on several issues: that DOS was simply unacceptable if the market was to reach its full potential; that Windows, with its graphical user interface and easy program installation, was better, but that Windows as it stood wasn't adequate to producing top games; and that if Microsoft couldn't help to address these problems, the game industry would have to do it on its own. "It was a very grassroots kind of situation," says Petchey. "You had the chip guys, the board guys, and the game guys in the same room, saying 'We want this.' And we were all in unison. We all wanted the same things."

Microsoft took this all quite seriously, and began working closely with the gaming industry to put together the OS everyone had always hoped for, and to build the Game SDK (Software Developer's Kit). And now, as Windows 95 nears completion, it looks like their efforts are going to pay off.

"Microsoft has worked incredibly hard to fix the problems, and I'm not the easiest person to convince," says Zack Simpson, director of technology for Ori-

gin Systems. One of the things that convinced many in the gaming world that Windows 95 just might be all it promises was word that Origin would begin working on games for Windows 95 — something Simpson and company very publicly swore they'd never do for Windows 3.1. "We said we'll never do a Windows 3.1 product, and we never will. We're going to go from DOS to Windows 95, and bypass 3.1 altogether."

Spectrum HoloByte is so confident of the Game SDK that it will design *Falcon 4.0* — the long-awaited sequel to one of the hottest flight sims in history — for Windows 95. And Spectrum's Steve Weinstein, vice president of product development, says the game will not only perform well, but will actually be easier to design. "Look at the things they take care of, that we won't have to worry about anymore. They take care of the video boards, the sound drivers — all of the problems of DOS and Windows 3.1 go away for game developers."

the Game SDK

These cutting-edge publishers' willingness to support Windows 95 is probably the best indication of how far the product has come since its unsuccessful first showing. Compared to Windows 95, MS-DOS is just barely an operating system — but game developers have clung to DOS despite this, or maybe because of it. Other than reading and writing files, MS-DOS doesn't do much for them, but at least it doesn't keep them from doing anything else they want to do, the way Windows 3.1 did.

To write an intense, high-performance game, programmers need efficient access to the lowest levels of a PC's hardware. For them, all of Windows 3.1's services and libraries just get in the way. Windows 95's new game subsystem, the Game SDK, is Microsoft's offer-

ing to the PC game community, a way to make life easier for game developers. With the Game SDK's five new game Application Program Interfaces, Windows 95 games should be able to not only match, but actually exceed the performance of games that run under MS-DOS.

The DirectDraw API gives game programmers total control of the screen and allows complete access to any acceleration hardware on the video card, while the Reality Lab API provides high-performance real-time 3D graphics either with or without hardware acceleration. The DirectSound API improves the quality of music synthesis and sound effects in games. The DirectInput API provides an interface to innovative new game controllers and also helps games make better use of standard mice and joysticks, and the DirectPlay API adds support for multiplayer network games to the Windows 95 operating system.

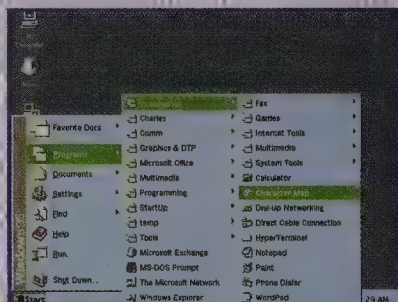
DirectDraw

This isn't the first time that Microsoft has tried to improve the performance of Windows graphics. Video for Windows already includes the DisplayDIB graphics library and the DCI device interface, two systems designed to speed up the process of transferring image data to the screen. And Microsoft introduced the WinG library last year, written specifically to improve Windows games.

These libraries helped, but they just weren't enough. WinG works fine for certain types of games, particularly for games that do a lot of 2D rendering in software. But without access to the basic hardware of video cards, WinG wasn't all that game developers might have hoped for. That's what makes the DirectDraw API the keystone of the Windows 95 game subsystem.

To game programmers, DirectDraw means 32-bit, ring-zero, device-independent, direct-to-video memory blitting, mode-setting, page-flipping, and transparency. For game players, that translates into the smoothest, fastest graphics for every type of PC game. With DirectDraw, Microsoft is making sure that game developers can use the same programming

amongst a screen full of confusing symbols; the eye is immediately drawn to the Start button. Click Start, and a menu pops up with all your programs



The Start menu can get cluttered, but you can run most programs with just a few clicks of the mouse.



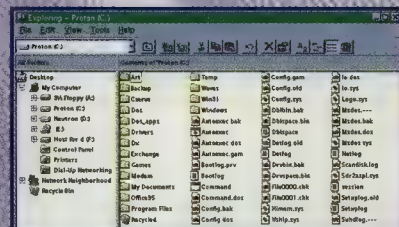
My Computer is a master window that holds all your computer's local resources. Once you open a disk drive, you can then open its folders right on your desktop with big, friendly icons.

laid out in neat, cascading menus. You can launch any program by choosing it from a menu, and get this — no double-clicking required.

Even the Start button is optional. Thanks to CD AutoPlay, one of Windows 95's new features, you can just insert an AutoPlay CD-ROM, and the game or application automatically installs itself (if

necessary), then runs immediately, just like a game cartridge. Pop in a music CD, and the CD Audio Player pops open and starts playing automatically.

To go beyond Start, you can open My Computer to explore your disk drives, CD-ROM, printer, and Control Panel. If you're on a network, Network



Explorer is preferred by power users, and is loaded with new file-management features.

*Say No to
Druids?*

unlikely!

Druid

A new style of game.
Coming of age this fall!

SIR-TECH

Product Information Number 130

Graphic Potential

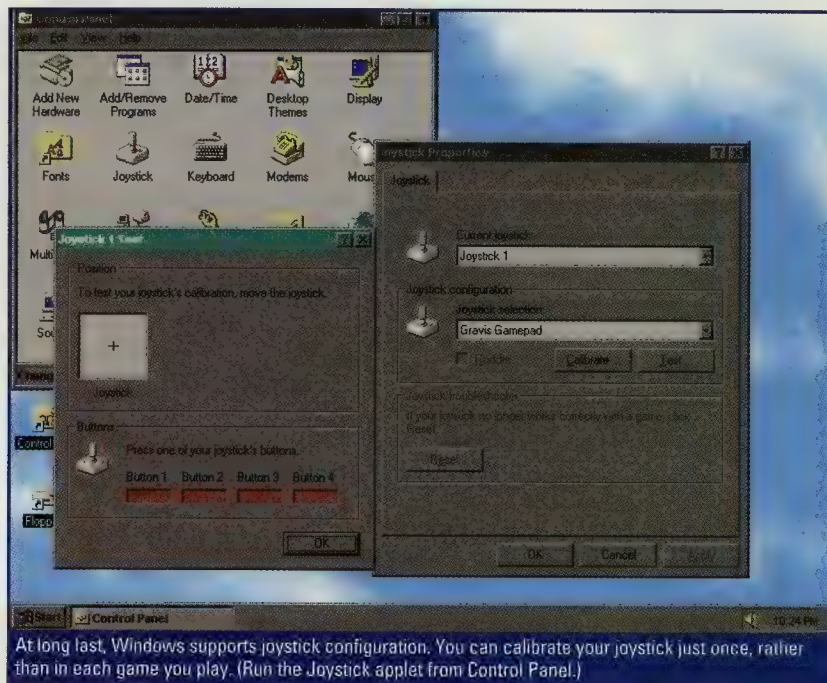
"I'm amazed to see how much money people are willing to pay in the arcades for just a few minutes of fun, yet what terrible graphics there are. I've been involved in computer graphics for years now, and you get so used to looking at high-res, high-color and true-color stuff that you forget what most people are working with. So when I look at the arcade games, I just think, Wow! People will pay a dollar a minute for this? We can do much better on the PC. People are just going to go gaga when they see what we can do."

— Craig Rush, product marketing manager, video products, Diamond Multimedia

techniques that they've been using under MS-DOS, and that performance under Windows 95 should be at least as good as it would be under DOS.

As a bonus, Microsoft went out and bought Britain's RenderMorphics, Ltd., the creators of an extremely advanced real-time 3D graphics library called Reality Lab. Developers of 3D-based PC games previously faced the tough choice of deciding whether to develop their own 3D polygon rendering engine — no easy task — or to swallow the cost of licensing an engine from a vendor like RenderMorphics. With the Reality Lab engine becoming a part of Windows 95, that choice has become much easier for most developers to make.

The game subsystem is a recent addition to Microsoft's plans for Windows 95, and some signs of its history can be seen in the relationship between DirectDraw, Reality Lab and Windows' standard GDI (Graphical Device Interface). DirectDraw and Reality Lab are each complete, stand-alone graphics sys-



At long last, Windows supports joystick configuration. You can calibrate your joystick just once, rather than in each game you play. (Run the Joystick applet from Control Panel.)

tems, independent of the GDI, and each software system uses its own device driver software; Reality Lab drivers conform to the new 3D DDI standard, while DirectDraw has its own HAL (Hardware Abstraction Layer). Microsoft promises to integrate DirectDraw more tightly into Windows 95's standard graphics services in future versions.

The DirectDraw API is designed to run quite well on a common 66MHz 486 PC, and even better on systems that have

Pentium-class CPUs or advanced graphics accelerators. As Microsoft's evangelists are fond of saying, there's no good reason why a \$2500 Pentium shouldn't be able to outperform a \$300 video game console. DirectDraw can even take advantage of the accelerator features of some existing video cards, long neglected by PC games. And with a software standard in place that makes it easy for games to use new accelerators, we might be in for an explosion of innovative video hardware.



FreeCell

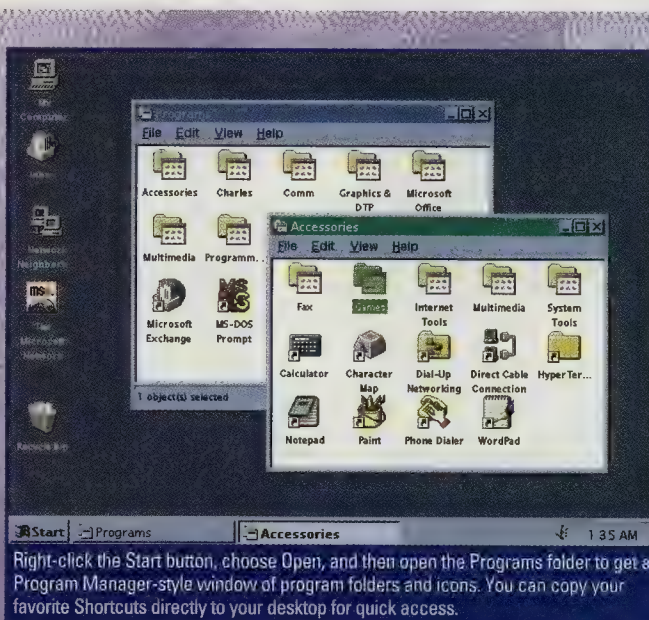
You can identify a Shortcut icon by the little "jump arrow" in the lower-left corner.

Neighborhood is your gateway to all the file servers and other shared resources, without having to attach to servers or even map drives.

Experienced users will prefer Explorer, a twin-pane alternative to file folders that's reminiscent of File Manager, yet more powerful in subtle ways. If you don't like climbing through your "directory tree," use the new File Finder to organize related files

in a non-hierarchical fashion.

So that explains what happened to File Manager, but what about Program Manager? For one thing, you don't really need such a crutch, since you're free to explore your hard drive. Just open up



Right-click the Start button, choose Open, and then open the Programs folder to get a Program Manager-style window of program folders and icons. You can copy your favorite Shortcuts directly to your desktop for quick access.

your hard drive, then the folder for the application you want, then double-click on the application.

You can also organize your programs by creating your own folders, then filling them with Shortcuts. A Shortcut is an icon that looks like the original program, but is actually only a link to the original

within the Programs folder contains Shortcuts to the programs you like to use most often.

As in Program Manager, you can view large icons and arrange them in folders. You can move, rename, even delete Shortcuts without harming the original file. Unlike Program Manager, you can put

file. You can create new folders with Shortcuts on the desktop, or place Shortcut icons on your desktop.

There's a special folder for Shortcuts in the Windows\Start Menu folder, called Programs (Many users will put a Shortcut to Programs on the desktop for quick access.) And together, the Programs folder and the Start Menu directly replace Program Manager. Each folder

"Triad is a truly awesome game." But don't take our word for it.

RISE OF THE TRIAD

D A R K W A R

"Rise of the Triad" is sure to have every DOOM freak in the world lining up just to drool all over it."

— Interactive Entertainment*

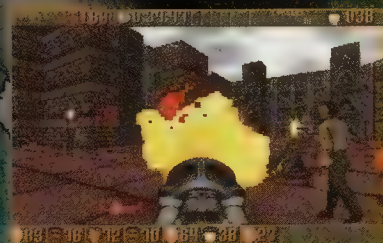
"Rise of the Triad" provides everything an action gamer could want."

— Computer Game Review

"This game is the most multiplayer-friendly product we've seen."

DeathMatch will never be the same again."

— Computer Gaming World



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Product Information Number 163

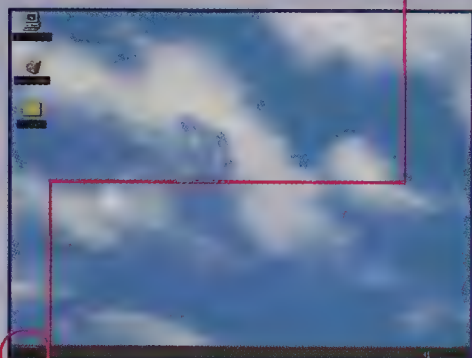


Created by Apogee Software, Ltd. and distributed by FormGen Inc. 7641 E. Gray Rd. Scottsdale, AZ 85260 (800) 263-2390
Available on disk and CD. Supports serial, modem, and 11-player network (individual or team) play.
(body bags not included)

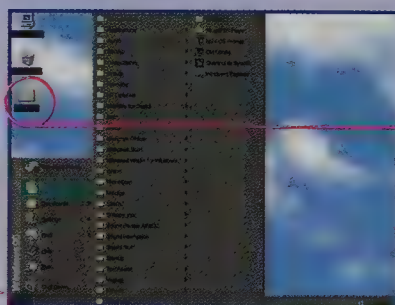
Close-up: The Way It Works

the DESKTOP

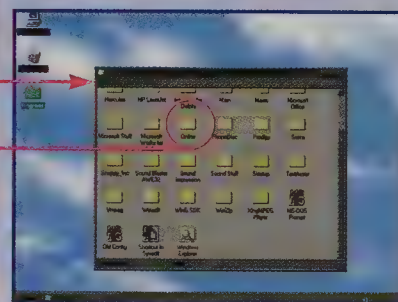
The new Windows Desktop is like a virtual workspace. It lets you access your files and programs in a number of ways, and can be customized to suit the way you like to work.



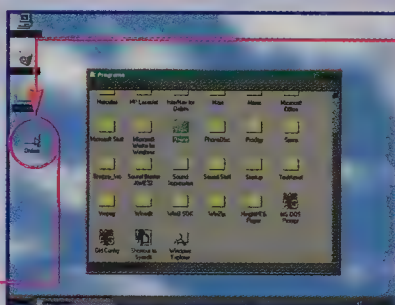
If you wanted, you could keep your desktop almost entirely clean. Just about all the programs and files you might want can be accessed by clicking and holding the Start button...



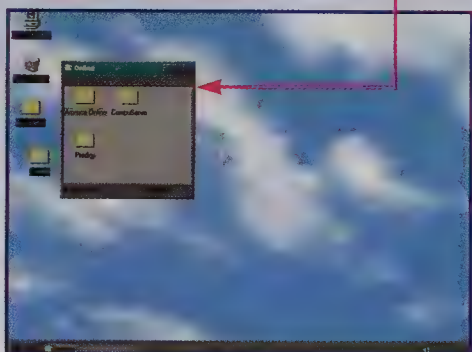
...which opens the automatically unfolding Start Menu. Just slide your pointer to the item you're interested in and let go of the mouse button. You can also get at your computer's contents by double-clicking on folders or items placed on the desktop itself...



...like the Programs folder. This opens a window specific to that desktop item, and you can keep double-clicking to investigate contents. But rather than having to first open the Programs folder to get at, say, your online folder...

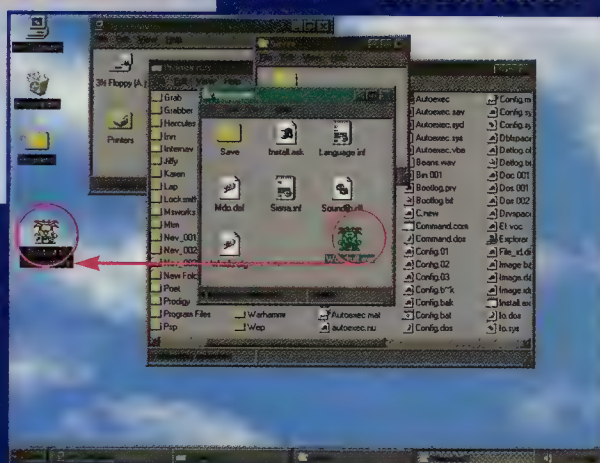


...you can click on the Online folder and drag it out to your desktop, where a double-click will open it...



...to let you at its contents. This obviously saves steps, but you'll have to decide if you'd rather click a few extra times, or keep your desktop clutter-free.

SHORTCUT

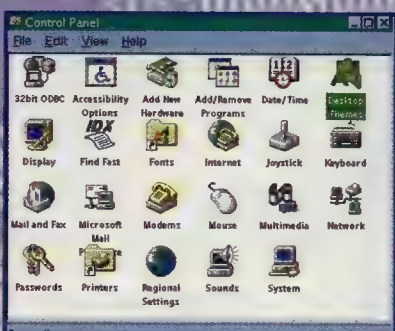


The ultimate click-saver, though, is the Shortcut. By first opening the specific file you want and locating the launch icon, then dragging that icon to the desktop, you create a Shortcut. From then on, you can instantly access the program you want without opening all those windows.

folders inside of folders to reduce clutter. Best of all, the organization of these Programs folders is directly updated on the Start menu, so you have easy access to your programs even if the desktop is covered up with open windows.

Under the Hood

While the look and feel are as important as any other improvement to Windows 95, Microsoft has also been tinkering with the Windows engine, and they've come up with some supercharged enhancements—most significantly, support for true 32-bit applications. It's technical stuff. With 32-bit memory access, programs no longer need to



The revamped Control Panel gives you full access to customization and configuration features.

divide their workspace into 64K blocks. Now they can directly access large, continuous regions of memory, which is much more efficient, and instead of scanning memory in two-byte (16-bit) chunks, they can manipulate their data in four-byte (32-bit) pieces: twice the data, at no additional cost (although this can make the program's code larger).

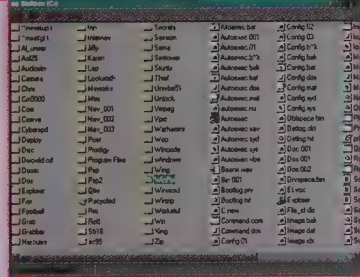
Efficient memory management also helps to virtually eliminate the resource limitations that could bring Windows to its knees when running many large programs at the same time. System resources in Windows 3.1 draw upon limited 64K heaps of memory that are all too easily consumed. Most of these resources are now supported via 32-bit memory access, limited only by your free memory. With 8 megabytes or more (the minimum we

file MANAGEMENT

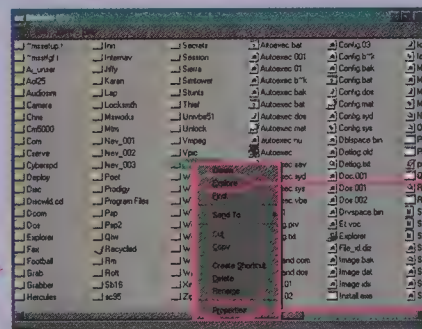
On the one hand, Windows 95 makes file management easy; you just arrange the desktop the way you like, and don't worry about whether an item is a file, a folder, or a program. But if you're used to DOS and prefer knowing all there is to know about the locations of your files, directories, and executables, you may find that Windows 95 blurs those distinctions a bit. Fortunately, there are a number of ways to keep track of things.



It can be tough to remember that the Programs folder isn't the physical location of all the files you find there, but really a collection of like programs and a few pertinent files. To get to your hard drive (the way you would by typing DIR in DOS), you have to open the My Computer icon, then select your hard drive...

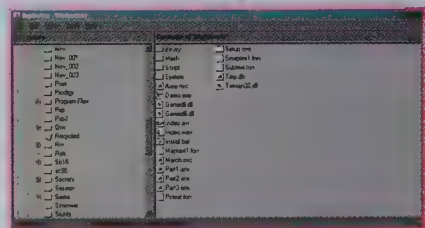


...to display the drive's contents. This brings up a menu a lot like File Manager in Windows 3.1.



With the drive contents window open, you can get specific info folders and their contents by right-clicking on the item you want to learn about. This brings up a menu with a number of possibilities, including Properties and Explore.

Select Explore to launch the Explorer, the new applet that pretty much replaces the old File Manager.

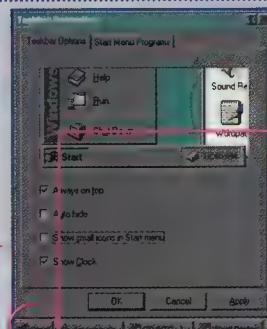
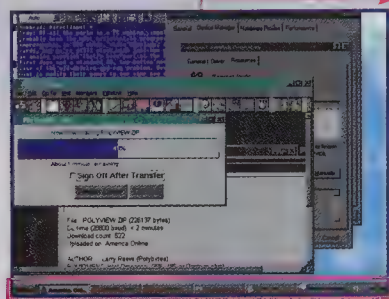


Select Properties to see specific information on that folder in a single, easy-to-use dialog box. This will tell you when the folder was created, how much space it and its contents are using, and more.

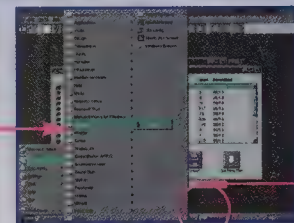
multi- TASKING

If you've never tried running five different programs at once, you're in for a treat. And even if you think you've been multitasking for years with Windows 3.1, just wait 'til you experience Windows 95.

Here's multitasking at its most useful—and impressive. I'm downloading a new image viewer for Win 95 while editing this article. In doing so, I ran across a few facts I had to check, so I also opened up the Control Panel to check on my joystick's properties. Then I opened up *Stunts* to make sure my joystick setup was working properly. And the whole time, I had the CD player running. The Taskbar at the bottom of the screen shows all the open programs...



...and, like the rest of the desktop, the Taskbar can be customized. You can choose to use small icons on the taskbar, for example, if you find you have a lot of tasks open at once. And regardless of the number of jobs you're doing...



...you can always launch more by clicking on the Start menu, then selecting the appropriate program. And when you're done...



...a single click on the appropriate Taskbar item will take you directly to the running program.

recommend for Windows 95), it's now possible to open documents using every application in a complete office suite, and still have resources to burn. (You may have read about of resource limits with 32-bit applications, but these premature reports were based on an earlier beta version that has since been updated to prevent the problem and free up even more system resources.)

32-Bit Multi-Computing

With 32-bit applications come true multitasking and multithreading. Windows 3.1 relied on cooperative multitasking (as does even the latest release of Apple's Macintosh System 7.5); each application has to voluntarily relinquish control periodically to give other applications an opportunity to run. A busy application can "hog the system," making you stare at an impatient hourglass until it's done. With

Windows 95 uses 32-bit components extensively for better performance and reliability. And that's not a typo: free resources are typically well over 85% with Windows 95, even with many applications running.



pre-emptive multitasking, the operating system takes over the scheduling of programs, forcing even busy programs to yield control and provide a fair playing field for all your running applications. Multithreaded applications spin off pieces of themselves, which also run smoothly in the background. Threading really takes advantage of multitasking. For example, an arcade game could use one thread to monitor the joystick, another to move your player, a thread to update the score, and a thread to play sound effects. Remember that these benefits only achieve full potential in 32-bit applications. All 16-bit applications pre-

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Product Information Number 100

Everybody Wins

"They've really fixed the problems we were facing. At this point in time, it's easier to write a game under Windows 95 than it is under DOS. And from a user's point of view, we'll be able to give them a game where they just pop the disc in, and we'll take it from there. The configuration problems, all of those install issues, will seem to vanish."

—David Petchey, staff scientist,
Mindscape

DirectSound

When we talk about hot PC games, graphics and video usually get most of the attention, but audio is also tremendously important. If you doubt this, try playing your favorite game with the sound turned off. Compared to its performance in some other areas, Windows 3.1 actually has a fairly good sound subsystem — although not good enough for real-time gaming. (In Windows 3.0, the sound library was part of the Windows Multimedia Extensions.) For Windows 95 games, the DirectSound API offers even better audio performance with less of a load on the system's CPU and more precise control of a game's soundtrack.

The biggest improvement offered by DirectSound is reduced latency. From the time a game posts a request to play a sound, it can take several hundred mil-



liseconds before the Windows Wave library actually begins playing the sound. Under DirectSound, this latency is cut to less than 50 milliseconds, and that's a big difference when you're trying to synchronize sound effects with a game's video. DirectSound also takes over the task of mixing sounds, making it easy for a game to play several sound effects at the same time while its musical soundtrack keeps playing.

Like the relationship between DirectDraw and the Windows GDI, DirectSound is a self-contained system of audio software, operating independently of the WinMM Wave and MIDI APIs. But they're able to coexist peacefully for the time, and Microsoft plans to integrate them more completely in a future version of the operating system.

DirectInput

Of all the parts in a PC system, input devices have probably been the most resistant to progress. We've seen amazing improvements in CPU chips, video displays, disk drives and sound cards, but we're still

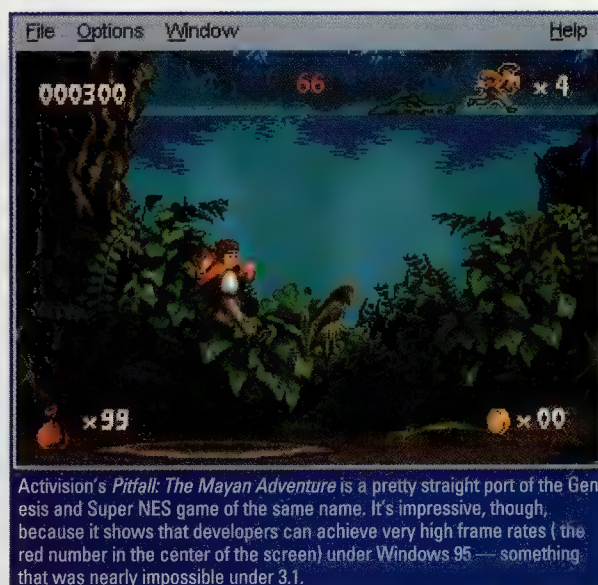
Optimized video drivers give accelerated punch to even average Super VGA cards, and there's fast, generic support for most other video cards, including all boards based on Cirrus Logic or S3 video accelerators.

The new, 32-bit Video for Windows is amazing, with full-screen movie playback on high-end 486 and Pentium systems without MPEG chips or other hardware. Even "average" 386 and 486 computers will enjoy smoother video playback in a larger window, with fewer dropped frames and better sound synchronization. Windows 95 also encourages wider acceptance of MPEG and MPEG II add-on hardware, with "universal" support for MPEG and related technologies such as Digital Signal Processing (DSP) chips.

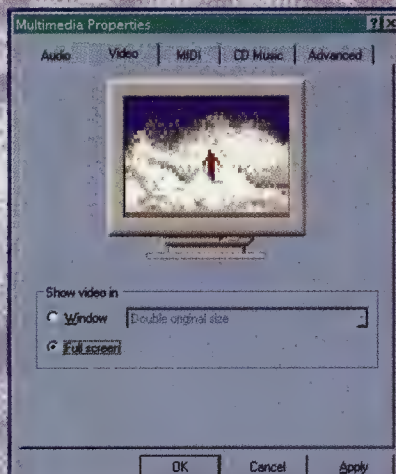
stuck with just two popular controllers: an analog joystick that's been part of the PC since its very first days and a standard 2D, two-button mouse. It's just another case of the old chicken-and-egg problem. Developers usually don't want to modify their games to use some new controller that only a few gamers own. And how many people are going to buy an innovative new controller when it only works with one or two games?

The DirectInput API might be what it takes to break the logjam. It acts as an interface layer between games and the controller devices that they use. Even if a new type of controller has an entirely different interface than anything that's come before, it'll work with Windows 95 games as long as it comes with a DirectInput device driver, the small piece of system software that tells DirectInput how to operate it.

The most immediate payoff from DirectInput might come from digital joy-



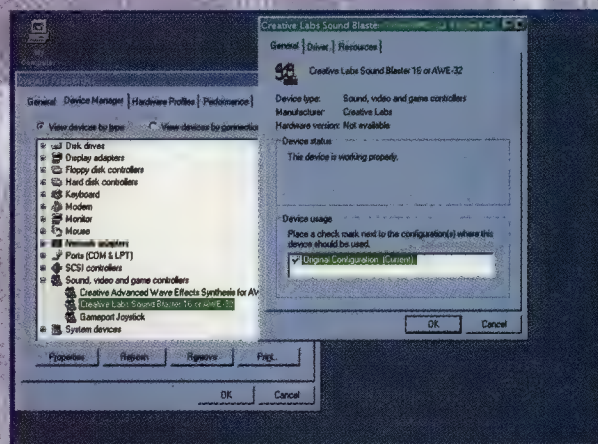
Activision's *Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure* is a pretty straight port of the Genesis and Super NES game of the same name. It's impressive, though, because it shows that developers can achieve very high frame rates (the red number in the center of the screen) under Windows 95 — something that was nearly impossible under 3.1.



If you have a fast computer and video card, you can set movie playback to default to full screen, which works best in 640x480 mode even without a "movie acceleration" video card. (Run the Multimedia applet from the Control Panel and click the Video tab heading.)

emptively multitask together, as a block with other 32-bit applications; but within that block, 16-bit programs continue to cooperatively multitask.

Windows 95 itself relies extensively on 32-bit components, such as the 32-bit VFAT disk and CD-ROM file system, a 32-bit TrueType font rasterizer, and a 32-bit graphics engine (GDI32).



Run the System applet from Control Panel and click the Device Manager tab, and you can browse through your computer's configuration, making it easy to solve hardware conflicts even with non Plug and Play machines.

Microsoft: Game Publisher

Clearly, the potential for profit in PC game publishing is one of the motives behind Microsoft's push to make Windows 95 a good gaming platform. And it looks like Gates & Co. is preparing to take a dip — at least in the shallow end — of the Game Publishing Pool.

Just take a look at a few new items that've popped up with Windows 95 and the upcoming *Plus!* add-on pack from Microsoft. There, amongst the usual Solitaire and Minesweeper, we found a new 3D pinball game and *Hover!*, a first-person action game. Neither is particularly noteworthy, but they do offer proof of Microsoft's awareness of the importance of gaming.

Further proof can be found in *Fury*²,



Hover! looks like a first-person shooter, but there's no shootin' to be done. You just grab the other guy's flags before he gets yours.

Microsoft's first stand-alone action game. It's based on Apogee's *Terminal Velocity* and features 3D flight and combat over a texture-mapped landscape. You get to blow up all kinds of things — a new option, as you *Flight Simulator* fans know.



Now this is more like it! *Fury*² let's you blast enemies, buildings, and even palm trees, to your heart's content, with no penalties for political incorrectitude.

Easy Upgrades

One of the most welcome new components of Windows 95, for everyone concerned, is Plug and Play support. The promise of Plug and Play is that you can pop open the case of your computer and insert a card, a hard drive, or CD-ROM, or hang any peripheral off the back, without worrying about complex configuration hassles such as coordinating unique IRQs, DMA settings, or I/O addresses. This type of "stick it in and it works" capability has long been taken for granted by Macintosh owners, with some degree of smugness.

At bootup, a Plug and Play computer initially disables all its optional hardware, then inventories the equipment, automatically resolving any conflicts, before enabling the Plug and Play hardware with compatible settings.

A Plug and Play computer can work with any expansion architecture, from ISA to EISA, MCA, VESA, or PCI, although PCI looks like it will carry the day, with support in even non-Intel systems such as new Apple PowerMacs and other RISC systems.

In many cases, your computer needs only a BIOS upgrade to fully comply with Plug and Play, although you'll also want to purchase PnP cards and peripherals to take full advantage of its ease of use. Some PCs, equipped with a Flash BIOS, can be upgraded with a diskette or a file downloaded from the vendor's bulletin board system. With older PCs, you'll have to swap your BIOS ROM chips or replace your computer's motherboard to get a true Plug and Play system.

Even without fully PnP-compliant equipment, Windows 95 goes out of its way to support legacy hardware with a minimum of fuss. During Setup,

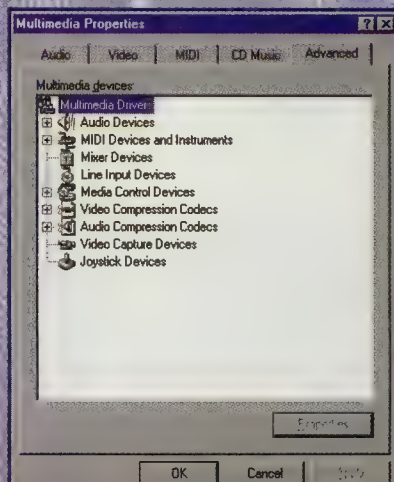
sticks. Reading an analog game port carries a serious overhead, burning as much as 12% of the CPU's processing power, so a digital interface would be much more efficient. DirectInput also opens the door to entirely new types of game controllers, with more buttons, more axes, and support for more players. Another new feature available via DirectInput is its support for sending data back to an input device, which could bring us force-feedback game controllers. That would be a huge boon for driving and flying games. After all, the single most important difference between a PC driving game and one in an arcade is the arcade game's force-feedback steering wheel — when you can "feel the road," it's much easier to drive the car at its limits.

PC joysticks add to the CPU load, and they're also a recurring nuisance when you have to recalibrate your joystick for every new game. DirectInput's Device Console should provide a standard way to calibrate the controller once and for all. The system will also give complete control over device mapping, letting you decide which button or stick on which input device controls each game action. Input mapping support won't be available until early in 1996, but when it shows up it'll be a great way to deal with games where the input mapping isn't as obvious as the flight yoke in a flying game or a steering wheel in a driving game.

DirectPlay

Computerized non-player opponents can be challenging, but there's something special about playing a game with other people. They're usually tougher competition, and you can be their opponents or their allies, or even both at different times in the same game. It's that subtlety of human interaction that makes multiplayer games a lot more fun, one which computers might never be able to grasp. And with long-distance multiplayer game networks, you stand a good chance of finding someone to play against, somewhere in the world, at any time of the day.

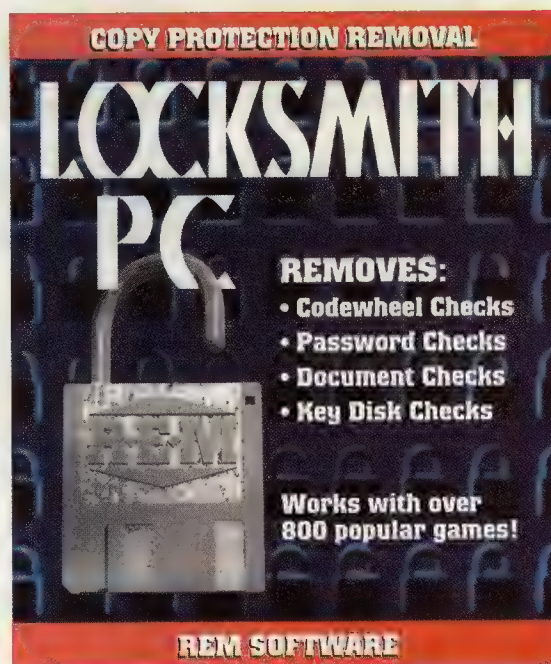
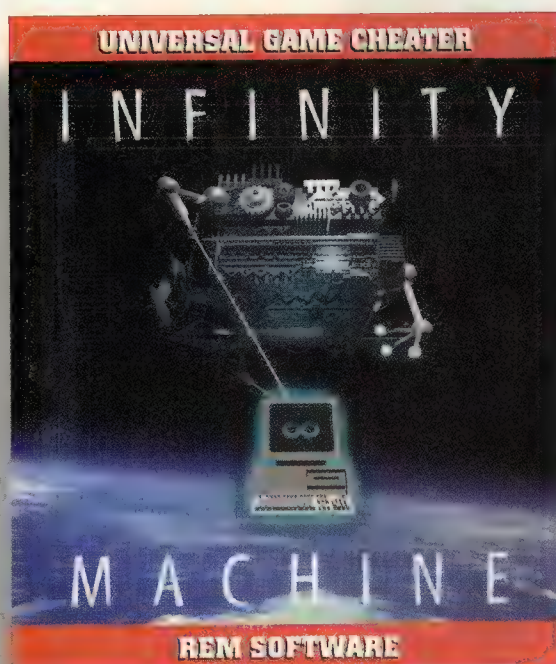
Networked games are hot, but



The Multimedia settings box in the Control Panel gives you total access to video, sound, and more.

"Sure, PC gamers have been promised this kind of thing before. What makes the **Infinity Machine** different from earlier utilities is this: it works."

—PC Gamer, June 1995



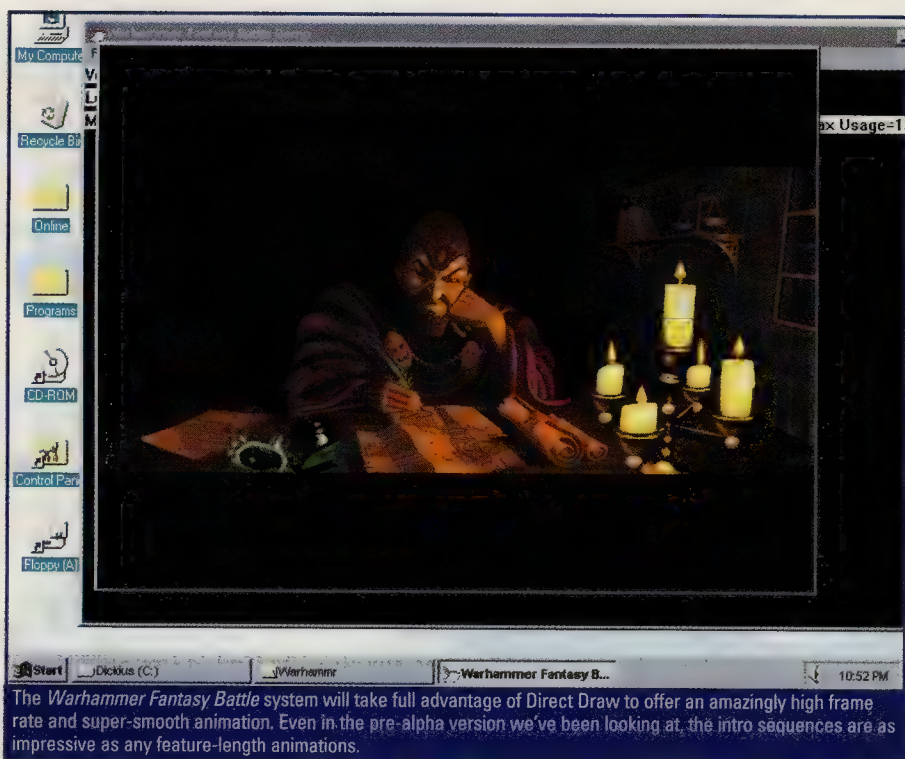
Infinity Machine has the critics—and many of you—smiling broadly. What could be simpler than altering game variables at the touch of a key? Unlimited health, ammo, money, shields means no more hassles from those ugly computer meanies.

Talking of hassles, while you're busy killing aliens is no time to be pestered by annoying copy protection routines. Squelch them permanently with Locksmith PC. No more code wheels, document checks, secret passwords, or key disks to clutter up your life.

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The *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* system will take full advantage of Direct Draw to offer an amazingly high frame rate and super-smooth animation. Even in the pre-alpha version we've been looking at, the intro sequences are as impressive as any feature-length animations.

adding code to handle this stuff to a game isn't easy. It's hard enough just handling all the things that can happen on one PC, but a networked game also has to deal with things happening on another PC, which might even be running the game at a different speed. Then there's the possibility of a communications glitch, where the network seems to disappear for a few moments, or of another system in the game hanging temporarily or disappearing completely at any moment.

DirectPlay spares programmers from having to worry about a lot of these details. Games can use the DirectPlay API to open a network connection, to register a player in a game and to send messages to other players, and it's designed to work over a modem, a local-area network or the Internet. With DirectPlay providing the interface to a full range of modems, network interface cards and network operating systems, game programmers can spend more of their time on the more interesting parts of their jobs.

With the Windows 95 game subsystem and the Game Software Development

Kit, developers can worry less about hardware support and system software and concentrate more on what they do best: creating compelling characters and environments, and designing exciting, challenging, playable games.

Motives, and Results

When you consider the Game SDK and all the rest the OS itself has to offer, Windows 95 is an impressive package — and the first to go so far out of its way to make itself gamer-friendly. But why, after so many years, would Microsoft suddenly decide that PC games were worth supporting? No one we spoke to was naive enough to think the Game SDK is the result of a sudden compassion for the long-neglected game community.

"I can tell you very simply what's at the base of this," says Origin's Zack Simpson. "Microsoft wants to be in the games business. They don't do things for other people's benefit; they do things

for their own benefit. Their really brilliant strategy is that what's in their competitors' interest is in their interest also."

Spectrum HoloByte's Steve Weinstein also suspects selfish motives. "I think Microsoft suddenly realized 'Hey, we don't have a compelling reason for home users to buy Windows 95. So how can we get the old users to jump on board? We'll make the games run well!'"

No matter what Microsoft's motives, the results so far are convincing enough that the hardware and software players are enthusiastic about supporting Microsoft's new OS, and looking forward to better performance, fewer problems, and potentially much better games than were previously possible under any operating system. DOS included. Besides, the publishers have their own selfish reasons for supporting Windows 95 — all of them relating back to the very real potential for Windows 95 to help boost the reach and importance of gaming.

"Let's face it," Weinstein says. "Every machine that's shipped in the near future will be Windows 95. So we're basically committed to it. I don't see how it won't succeed; it's just a question of how long it'll take for older users to jump on board."

Papyrus' VP and chief technology Officer, David Kaemmer, is excited at the prospect of no-hassle software installation; 80% or more of the calls to any game company's tech support department are related to hardware configurations, memory, and other machine-related problems that really have nothing to do with the software. "A lot of our customers are not necessarily PC gamers, but just racing fans. So we get a great many calls from people who're having a lot of trouble just getting the games running. I think Windows 95 could help out with that a lot."

Zack Simpson and Origin are signing on partly because of the opportunity to use the Game SDK's APIs to access exciting new video hardware — a feature just about everyone we talked to was excited to use. "The truth is that there's a lot of neat hardware on almost everyone's videocards," says Simpson. "All kinds of junk that's primarily there to accelerate Word and Excel and those kinds of programs. It's been there since like 1990, but we've never had the chance to play with it because there was never a DOS driver set for those features. So the way I look at, they've given me access to the frame buffer so now I can get at least the performance I did under DOS. And in addition to that, there's this whole new bag of tricks I get to play with that I didn't get to play with under DOS."

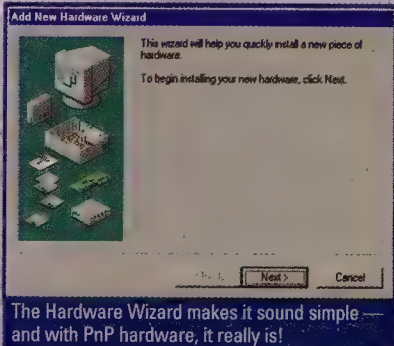
"Aside from being a developer," Simpson says, "I'm a satisfied customer."

We put the question to Mindscape's David Petchey quite simply: Are you saying, as staff scientist, that Windows 95 is actually a *better* game development platform than DOS? "Oh, yeah," he answered immediately. "It's going to be a big hit."

PCG

Windows 95 attempts to detect your equipment and install the necessary drivers preconfigured with the correct IRQ settings and so forth. When you want to add non-PnP hardware, first install the drivers with Windows 95, and it will tell you how to configure the card to avoid conflicts with existing hardware. With Device Manager, you can browse your computer's configuration information and let the Conflict Troubleshooter walk you through the steps needed to correct any problem.

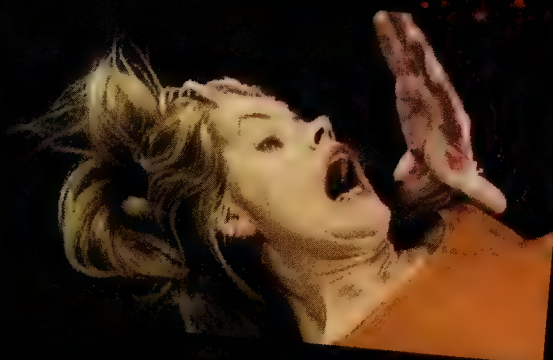
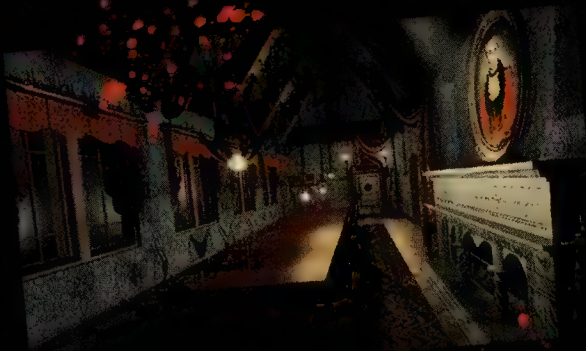
— Charles Brannon is the co-author of *The Windows 95 Book* (ISBN 1-56604-154-6), published by Ventana Press.



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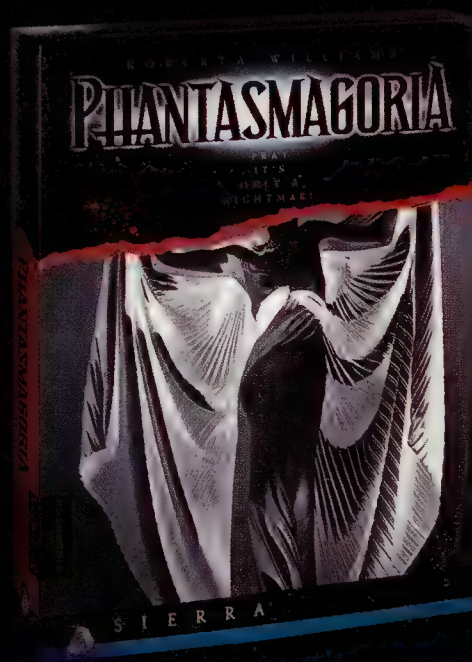
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E3 ENTERTAINMENT CUBE

Dozens of new games previewed — our report from the Electronic Entertainment Expo

If you've never been to a really big trade show like the Electronic Entertainment Expo, nothing can prepare you for it. A dozen viewings of Kubrick's *2001*, backed by the best hallucinogenics money can buy, couldn't prepare you for the sensory overload. The finest sneakers known to man — so light and airy even Ray Bradbury on his best day couldn't describe them, and lined with insoles Dr. Scholl never imagined in his wildest dreams — couldn't prepare your feet for the pain.

See, that's what a trade show really is. You spend nine hours a day, walking and standing (mostly walking) on hard concrete floors veiled by only the thinnest indoor-outdoor carpeting. You meet an endless succession of weary marketing people and game producers, and you listen as they recite the litany of their products' innovative features. Occasionally, you meet someone you've gone drinking with at previous shows, and you have an actual conversation — but mostly you just smile and nod in the appropriate places. You load your briefcase, gym bag or backpack down with sell-sheets, CD-ROMs, floppies, and business cards. Then, at the end of the day, you try to sort it all out. What was the name of that sharp-looking space combat sim we saw this morning? Or was that yesterday morning? And, come to think of it, was it a space game or a racing game?

Thank God for press kits.

By the end of the first day, you're simply hoping to see something — anything — that could make this death-march worthwhile. Something that looks interesting, innovative, or just plain fun. And, fortunately, there was a lot of that to see at E3. That's because this was the first show ever dedicated to our industry alone, the first show where computer gaming wasn't

treated like a red-headed stepchild, relegated to a corner of the exhibition hall behind the VCRs, cell phones and subwoofers. So virtually everyone in the industry was there, from the biggest multi-label publishers to the newest two-game startup companies. And so was the mainstream media, from CNN to NBC to *Daily Variety*. It was glorious.

As is true of most shows, though, there was plenty on display at E3 that we've already told you about, a few companies we just didn't have time to talk to, and some products that simply weren't worth covering. You won't find that stuff here. This is our list of the most important new products of the show...

ACTIVISION

The biggest news at the Activision booth was the long-awaited — and long-delayed — *MechWarrior II*, the robot-combat game based on FASA's BattleTech roleplaying universe (for a more detailed report on *MWII*, check out the Eyewitness section in our June issue). This sequel to one of Activision's most successful titles ever is looking very sharp, and it should be sitting

on store shelves as you read this.

Veteran gamers will be just as excited about *Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure*. In this sequel to the classic Atari 2600 cartridge, Pitfall Harry's son braves the wilds of a Mayan jungle to rescue his father from an evil warrior. *The Mayan Adventure* will be a Windows 95 game, and it should quiet anyone who's still skeptical about the new operating system's gaming capabilities. It's set to hit the stores in September.

BETHESDA

At the Bethesda booth, a game called *The 10th Planet* was the center of attention. This space-combat sim is being developed in cooperation with Centropolis Entertainment, creators of science fiction films like *Universal Soldier*, *Stargate*, and the upcoming Fox production, *Independence Day*. Its state-of-the-art graphics are made ultra-realistic by some truly remarkable lighting effects. Watch for this one in the first quarter of next year.

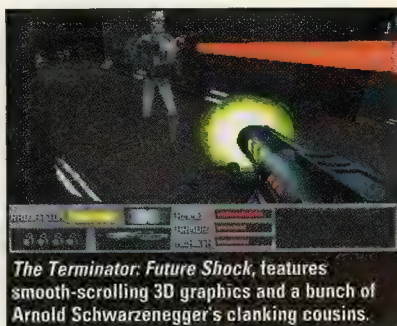
Around the end of the year, Bethesda will release *X-CAR: Experimental Racing*, a near-future driving game that lets gamers design and test their own high-tech automobiles. *X-CAR* will feature 3D, texture-mapped graphics at SVGA resolutions up to 640x480.

Bethesda's sports line will expand with *PBA Bowling*. This official computer game of the Professional Bowlers Association will feature a painstakingly realistic physics model, digitized players, and full-motion video. No word yet on whether or not you'll get to break for virtual beers after the fifth frame. *PBA Bowling* is slated for the third quarter of 1995, so it may be available as you read this.

Also very close to release as we go to press are *Daggerfall*, the sequel to *Bethesda*



Our Intrepid Hero has a close call in the Windows 95 game *Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure*.



The Terminator: Future Shock, features smooth-scrolling 3D graphics and a bunch of Arnold Schwarzenegger's clanking cousins.

da's highly-acclaimed RPG, *The Elder Scrolls: Arena*; and *The Terminator: Future Shock*, a 3D action game featuring everyone's favorite marauding cyborg.

BLIZZARD

Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness, the sequel to one of last year's best strategy games, drew a crowd to Blizzard's booth. The designers have included almost every suggestion they got from the original game's rabid fans, and they've added some improvements of their own. *Tides* (covered in last month's Scoop! section) will feature veteran scenarios for advanced players; modem and network support for as many as eight players; Super VGA graphics; a map, scenario and unit editor; and a whole slew of new military units, including fantasy-style aircraft carriers, airships, and destroyers.

Pax Imperia 2 was on display right beside *Tides*, but it earned its own share of oohs and ahhs. It's a complex space strategy game that just may make *Master of Orion* look simplistic. Look for this one around Christmas, too.

Next year will bring two more impressive new experiences from Blizzard. *Diablo* is a supernatural roleplaying game with modem and network support for multiple players, and *Shattered Nations* is a futuristic strategy game that challenges you to rebuild civilization in a post-holocaust world.



Look, new mechs! *Shattered Nations* is Blizzard's post-holocaust strategy game.

BULLFROG

The guys who inspired us to put a frog on our June cover brought a whole slew of great-looking games to L.A. *The Indestructibles* (which carried the working title of *My Incredible Super Team*) is a superhero game that takes spectacular advantage of Bullfrog's hot 3D technology. *Gene Wars* is a unique strategy game that'll have gamers morphing harmless animals into deadly mutants and pitting them against the enemy's unholy creations. *Theme Hospital*, the sequel to *Theme Park*, is another "god-game" with a sense of

humor. *Creation*, based on the amazing *Magic Carpet* 3D engine, is a futuristic undersea action game in which you work with intelligent sea life (dolphins and killer whales) to save a distant planet.

The most innovative product at the Bullfrog booth (and one of the most creative at the whole show) was *Dungeon Keeper*, a fantasy "god-game" that turns the tables on all those valiant adventurers, putting you in charge of a dangerous dungeon. Gorgeous graphics depict the action as you populate your home with monsters to deal with bands of invading heroes.

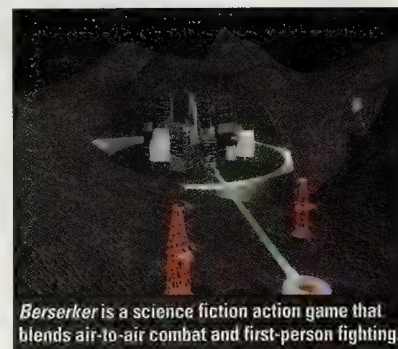
Two sequels are as newsworthy as any of Bullfrog's original stuff: *Magic Carpet II: The Netherworlds* will have faster, smoother graphics, and night missions with some incredible lighting effects; and *Syndicate Wars*, the sequel to Bullfrog's dark, near-future strategy game, *Syndicate*, will have radically improved graphics and multi-player action.

CAPSTONE

These guys are breaking away from their reputation as a publisher of competent casino packs and traditional strategy games with a handful of promising titles. *TekWar*, an action/adventure game based on the novels and TV series created by William Shatner, features a new, Super VGA 3D engine and modem/network play for as many as 16 gamers. The graphic adventure *Chronomaster* is a time-travel game written by legendary science fiction writer Roger Zelazny. *Witchaven* is a more traditional adventure, a swords-and-sorcery game set in a detailed 3D environment.

DOMARK

Domark had a nice mix of games to show us, ranging from fantasy through air combat to science fiction. A 3D, texture-mapped environment and advanced AI grace *Lords of Midnight: The Citadel*, a fantasy RPG. *Confirmed Kill* is Domark's multi-player Internet air combat game that has flight-sim fans drooling in anticipation. *Berzerker* combines first-person and air-to-air combat set in a futuristic setting, and *Absolute Zero* is a space combat game with a graphic twist: It supports most of the popular graphics accelerator chips, and it'll run at Super VGA resolutions as high as 1,024 x 768 if you've got the hardware horsepower required.



Berzerker is a science fiction action game that blends air-to-air combat and first-person fighting.

FOX INTERACTIVE

20th Century Fox's software division showed us *Bluestar*, a science fiction



Fox's *Monster Island* lets you run amok in true monster-movie style.

adventure set on a space station where Earth's brightest minds — humans and dolphins — work together on the most ambitious scientific projects in history. The twist: Your character is one of those clever dolphins.

Monster Island looks a little like a 1990s update of the arcade classic *Rampage*; it lets you take control of your favorite movie-style monster and wreak havoc on an urban landscape.

Ironically, Fox showed only one movie-based product: *Hellraiser: Virtual Hell* is a stylish graphic adventure based on Clive Barker's gruesome horror movies. Posters decorating the Fox booth hinted at other film- and TV-inspired games, though, including *Die Hard with a Vengeance*, *Return of the Apes*, *Alien 4*, *The X-Files*, and *Virtual Simpsons*.

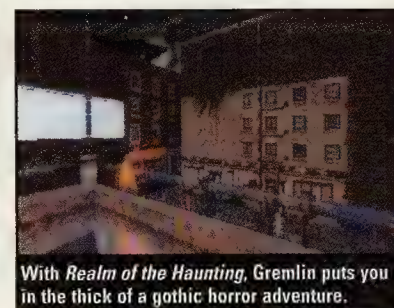
GAMETEK

Check out the Scoop! section in this issue for an in-depth look at *The War College*, GameTek's sequel to two ground-breaking wargames, *Universal Military Simulator* and *UMS II*. Another sequel in the works at GameTek is *RoadWarrior*, a follow-up to *Quarantine* that'll take you and your killer cab outside of Kemo City in high-res SVGA graphics.

If you bought the CD-ROM edition of this month's *PC Gamer*, pop *The CD* in your computer for a demo of *CyberBykes*, a futuristic two-wheeled racing game spiced up with plenty of combat.

GREMLIN

Thanks to a distribution deal with Interplay, UK-based Gremlin has a stronger presence in the states than ever — and thanks to *Slipstream 5000*, they've got a stronger reputation than ever. So what's next from our British friends? Well, they're promising that *Fatal Racing* will be the "best PC racing game of all time." It's too early to tell whether or not that's brag or fact, but what we saw at the expo looked pretty impressive, with its slick,



With *Realm of the Haunting*, Gremlin puts you in the thick of a gothic horror adventure.

texture-mapped 3D graphics and stunt-filled tracks. *Realm of the Haunting* looks fairly sharp, too; it's a horror adventure set in an shadowy, atmospheric 3D mansion with detail so realistic you'd swear you could reach out and touch the oak paneling and imported rugs.

I-MOTION/ INFOGRAMES

The Lyon, France-based designers of the acclaimed *Alone in the Dark* series had some intriguing adventures to show off at the expo. In *Prisoner of Ice*, their second "Call of Cthulhu" game, Nazis summon H.P. Lovecraft's shambling horrors to threaten the free world, and only Ryan, an American agent working with the British Royal Navy, can stop them.

Knights Chase is a time-travel adventure that has the player taking on the role of William Tibbs, a young law student who must investigate the secrets of the Knights Templar and travel back to medieval days to rescue his fiancée. This one will be done in a 3D style similar to *Alone in the Dark*, but it'll be enhanced with Super VGA graphics.

Outside the adventure arena, there's the space-combat game *Chaos Control*, with its Japanimation-style graphics; and *C.E.O.* (formerly known as *A4 Networks*), an empire-building strategy game developed in cooperation with CNN — that's right, the Cable News Network. *C.E.O.* will feature full-motion video sequences with veteran actor James Coburn as millionaire Dwight Owen Barnes.



Prisoner of Ice opens on a British Royal Navy Submarine during WWII.

INTERACTIVE MAGIC

Software cowboy William "Wild Bill" Stealey's Interactive Magic has a truckload of games set to come out in the near future. *Exploration* is IM's bid for a share of the suddenly-booming market for buy-low-sell-high games. Set in the great age of tall ships and uncharted oceans, it'll have support for as many as four players.

War Patrol, a Windows-based submarine sim, lets gamers take command of American or Japanese vessels during in more than 40 WWII-era missions.

IM's entry in the increasingly competitive space race is an action game called *Space Rangers*. In addition to fast-paced combat, the game will have a strategic campaign element, in the tradition of the Atari classic, *Star Raiders*.

Last, but certainly not least, is *F-16 Fighting Falcon* — a high-tech simulation of General Dynamic's F-16C jet, developed by Digital Integration, the firm that created *Tornado* for Spectrum HoloByte. Digital Integration also designed Interactive Magic's own *Apache* helicopter sim.

IMPRESSIONS

You can always expect a few surprises from the folks at Impressions, and that was certainly the case when we stopped by their booth at E3. Though we knew we could expect to get an update on the company's most anticipated titles, *Powerhouse* and *Breach 3*, (which should be on shelves by the time you read this), we soon found ourselves mesmerized by Caesar himself (portrayed by a very convincing, if long-winded, actor) reveling in the wonders of Impressions' *Caesar II*.

This sequel to the dynasty-building classic *Caesar* lets players conquer the world as only a true Caesar could. Boasting beautiful SVGA graphics and a wealth of tools to begin the conquest, this one will sit high on the "must play" list when it's released in mid-summer.

Another title drawing admiring looks from the PC Gamer staff was *Star Bucks*, which is best described as a far-future version of *Detroit*, where you build space-faring vessels instead of four-door sedans.

Wargamers will also get the chance to take on the world, as Impressions prepares to roll out a wargaming tour de force titled *World War II: 1939-1945* later in the year. You'll have a choice of historic battles or those infamous "what if?" campaigns throughout the course of the war.

LUCASARTS

Even though LucasArts is riding high on the summer charts with their current release *Full Throttle* and gearing up to do the same in the fall with *The Dig*, don't expect these hard-working folks to take a break anytime soon.

Production has begun on *Rebel Assault II*, the sequel to the best-selling arcade/adventure game, and this time LucasArts is pulling out all the stops by filming new full-motion video sequences



The first-person adventure *Calia 2095* puts you in the epicenter of a devastating earthquake, where the only friend you can trust is a laser pistol.

using actual Star Wars sets, props and costumes, doing it all with the blessing of George Lucas.

Then there's *Calia 2095*, an ambitious project with an eye towards redefining the first-person genre. With elements of adventure gaming combined with a healthy dose of shooting action, this highly stylized thriller stands to turn gamers on their ears sometime in the fall.

LEGEND

Though the last major release from Legend, *Death Gate*, came out about 5 months ago, it's obvious they haven't been sitting on their hands during the downtime; they've got three new adventure games scheduled for release this fall.

The first, *Mission Critical*, is a sci-fi adventure game with a top-notch story line, and it features some stunning SVGA graphics as well as some choice full-motion video starring actor Michael Dorn (best known as Worf on "Star Trek: The Next Generation"). Best of all, MC uses the tried-and-true Legend interface, ensuring the game will be very playable.

Roleplayers tired of the usual hack-

PC GAMER READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

PC gaming's top publishers joined us at L.A.'s Westin Bonaventure Hotel on the first night of the expo for snacks, beer, and some star-watching (Johnny Depp and Christopher Walken were shooting a movie in the hotel bar). Oh, and somewhere in there, we found time to present the first PC Gamer Readers' Choice Awards.

Game of the Year
Doom • id Software

Best Roleplaying Game
Ultima VIII • Origin

Best Wargame
Aces of the Deep • Sierra

Best Arcade Game
Mortal Kombat • Ultratech

Best Action Game
Doom • id Software

Best Adventure Game
System Shock • Origin

Best Simulation
NASCAR Racing • Papyrus

Best Sports Game
NASCAR Racing • Papyrus

Best Strategy Game
X-COM • MicroProse

Best Historical Simulation
Colonization • MicroProse

Best CD-ROM Enhancement
X-Wing • LucasArts

Design Excellence
Doom II • id Software

Best Graphics
Wing Commander III • Origin

Best Acting
Under a Killing Moon • Access

Best Joystick
Phoenix • Advanced Gravis

Best Speakers
Bose

Best Educational Product
Microsoft Encarta '95 • Microsoft

Best Puzzle Game
Lode Runner: The Legend Continues • Sierra

Best Sound Card
Sound Blaster AWE32 • Creative Labs

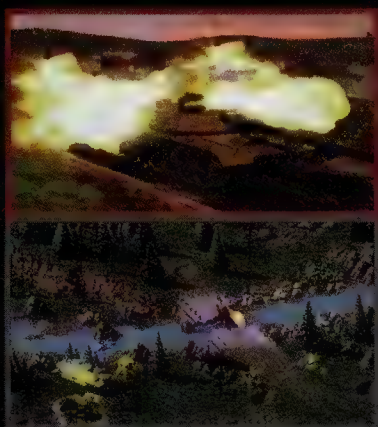
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Product Information Number 102



With a cast that includes "ST:TNG" veteran Michael Dorn, *Mission Critical* may become the *Wing Commander* of adventure games.

and-slash games will want to check out *The Sword of Shannara*, based on the works of fantasy writer Terry Brooks. This epic tale encompasses a vast game world, and it should make for some pretty interesting adventures.

For fantasy of a different sort, fans of *The Companions of Xanth* will be happy to hear production has begun on the second installment in the Xanth series, *Legends of Xanth*. Based on Piers Anthony's Xanth novels, *Legends* should have even more of the humor and ponderful puzzles that made the first such a hit.

MERIT

The guys at Merit must have seen us coming, because before we could even introduce ourselves, the first words out of their mouths were "Harvester will definitely ship in the fourth quarter!" Well, after a brief peek at the latest build of this long-delayed game, it looks like they were telling the truth—but we've gotta say, we still wish they'd do something about that annoying clown fellow.

We didn't have any complaints as we checked out the rest of their titles, though.

CyberJudas, the sequel to *The Shadow President*, is shaping up quite nicely as it approaches its July release, with even more of the back-stabbing intrigue that characterized the first game.

For release later in the year, Merit is working on two adventure games with a cyberpunk flair, *Archangel* and *The Rogarian Agenda*, and a flight sim based on the famous Flying Tigers squadron from WWII, titled simply *Flying Tigers*.

MINDSCAPE

If you were intrigued by our Scoop! of *Savage Warriors*, we're happy to report the very violent and stylish fighting game has improved by leaps and bounds since we last saw it. But even as impressed as we were by the latest incarnation of the life-and-death struggle of *Warriors*, nothing could hold a candle to Mindscape's graphic adventure, *Aliens*. Though we'd seen many of the same scenes when preparing our March cover feature, those creepy xenomorphs still managed to scare the bejeezus out of us. Very cool.

Mindscape even manages to bring thrills and chills to the stratosphere, with the air combat simulation *Air Power: Battle for the Skies*. They've rewritten the history of WWII (the Allies have lost) and put you in the cockpits of some of the oddest-looking aircraft ever created as you fight for survival against an evil regime. Definitely one to watch for.

Fans of fantasy games will be getting a double whammy from Mindscape's newly acquired Warhammer license as

they gear up to release the *Warhammer Fantasy Battle System* and *Warhammer 40,000: Dark Crusaders* this fall. The FBS is a strategy game based on the rules of FASA's Warhammer miniatures game, while *Dark Crusaders* uses a first-person perspective as you take command of a squad of Terminator Marines to fight off hordes of menacing Orcs. Both titles should be available in the late fall.

With an eye towards the future, Mindscape was proudly showing off a beta of *NCAA Football for Windows 95*. It one of the best football sims we've seen, complete with customizable plays and player stats, and great SVGA graphics. Best of all, it performs much faster under the new OS than it could under DOS, meaning you'll hit the gridiron in less time.

MICROPROSE

After a few months of back-to-back releases, we weren't sure what to expect from the folks at MicroProse. Had the well run dry? Would there be any new games planned for the rest of the year? Well, the good news is MicroProse has been hard at work the whole time and has six new titles heading our way.

Strategy fans will have *Weird War II* and *Aztec: Empire of Blood* to occupy the summer months as they await the long-promised and much-delayed *Across the Rhine*, now slated for early fall. And if you're eager to try the computer adaptation of *Magic: The Gathering*, you won't have long to wait. We're still puzzled by the popularity of this strange card game, so it'll be interesting to see if the PC version can make believers out of us.

And what would a MicroProse schedule be without at least one air-combat sim? *Navy Strike*, though suffering from a few delays, will jet its way across PCs soon. We don't want to speak too soon, but if the game is done as well as *PAW: 1942*, *Navy Strike* just might be the sim to beat.

While *Virtual Karts* isn't exactly a sim, the down-and-dirty action of go-cart racing provides challenges of its own, with network and modem options allowing players to hit the track and each other on a variety of difficult courses.



When do we cross the Rhine? According to MicroProse, it'll be early this fall.

NEW WORLD COMPUTING

There wasn't much new to report from the New World Computing booth; just updates on when titles like *Heroes of Might and Magic*, *Wetlands*, *Metal Lords* (formerly titled *MechLords: The Inner Cir-*

cle), and *Empire II* will be ready to hit store shelves. All of them should arrive sometime in the late fall/early winter of '95.

There was one new title we hadn't seen before, though: *Anvil of Dawn*, a fantasy roleplaying game where players take on the armies of an evil overlord.

OCEAN

After years of producing cartridge games, Ocean has made steady progress into the PC market with titles like *Robocop 3D*, *Inferno* and *TFX*, and while those products were met with a lukewarm reception, it looks like things may begin to heat up for Ocean, starting with their fall lineup.

The action starts with *TFX EF2000*, a terrific-looking flight sim where you'll fly the EuroFighter 2000. Featuring texture-mapped SVGA graphics and designed with network and modem play in mind, *EF2000* will let players engage in combat with as many as eight people, as well as try their bogey-busting abilities in a series of challenging single-player campaigns over realistic terrain.

And if you've been waiting to sink your teeth into a chopper sim with easy networkability and realistic action, *Blades of Rage* takes *EF2000*'s hi-res graphics engine and multi-player features and incorporates them into a fast-flying helicopter simulation that's sure to please chopper jocks everywhere. Expect *Blades of Rage* sometime around Christmas.

ORIGIN

After attending a press and cast party to kick off the start of production on *Wing Commander IV*, meeting Malcolm McDowell and Mark Hammill, and taking a brief tour of the new sets at Hollywood's Renmar studios, we might have found it easy to overlook the work Origin has put into the rest of their lineup.

But once we'd shaken the stars out of our eyes and taken a second look at the other games Origin has in the works, we realized the folks in Austin aren't putting all of their huevos in one basket.

The first title we want to get our hands on is *CyberMage*, a comic-book inspired adventure that takes 3D, first-person action to a new level of interactivity, letting your character take control of all sorts of vehicles (cars, tanks, motorcycles, etc.) and explore a vast city in search of his identity. The game features an incredible SVGA mode that really has to be seen to be believed, and features a non-linear story line.

Crusader: No Remorse is an action game that uses an updated version of the top-down *Ultima 8* engine. Although we really didn't like the arcade feel of Origin's *Ultima 8*, the way the engine's been revamped for use in the intentionally arcadey *Crusader: No Remorse* is simply amazing. In this futuristic shoot-'em-up, the player controls an assassin who's trying to shed his killing life and free the world of an oppressive regime. We want it now! Both *CyberMage* and *Crusader: No Remorse* are due in the fall.

PSYGNOSIS

It's almost inevitable; when you visit Psyg-

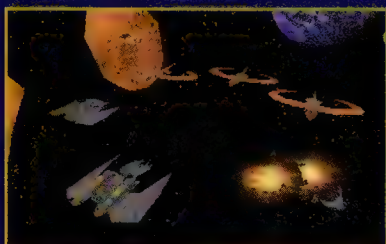
The Best of the Show

Los Angeles isn't a city known for its sincerity. Hollywood's form-over-substance reputation has led to a distinct feeling that you have to take everything you hear in the City of Angels with a grain of salt.

The locals seem to know that. It's probably why the big, angry Los Angelino who welcomed us to his town with a hale and hearty shout of "I'm going to kill everyone *in* that cab!" felt the need to assure us of his earnestness by adding "And you can *believe* that!"

It's no coincidence that computer entertainment is sometimes referred to as the "New Hollywood." Just like the movie business of many moons ago, PC gaming is enjoying explosive growth, and the shock wave is sweeping a lot of people along with it, driving them to new heights of ecstatic enthusiasm. As a result, every new PC game is presented to the public as the hottest, newest, biggest, fastest, greatest thing on the market. So how do you know what to believe?

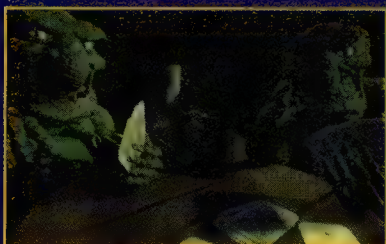
Well — if you don't mind taking our word for it — here's a quick rundown of the most impressive games we saw at E3. Keep in mind that most of these games are still far from finished, so we can only give you our educated guesses on which games will be your best bets in the coming year.



The 10th Planet has to be seen to be believed; this still frame doesn't begin to do it justice.

THE 10TH PLANET

What kept this space combat title from disappearing into the crowd of *Wing Commander* clones we saw? Two words: superb graphics. The 10th Planet's visuals put it light-years ahead of most other space sims. Special lighting effects give your deep-space surroundings a starkly realistic look. Playing the demo of the game, we were amazed to see how our laser blasts lit up the dark side of a nearby asteroid. The feel of floating far from the sun was really convincing. It might seem subtle, but a game that shows this sort of attention to detail usually turns out to be something special.



Bullfrog had a lot of great stuff to show off, but *Dungeon Keeper* was seen by all of us as the most innovative of the bunch.

DUNGEON KEEPER

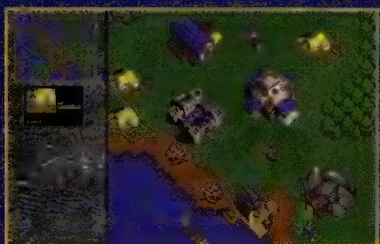
Picking the best of Bullfrog's new games was just about the hardest part of writing this report. But *Dungeon Keeper* was probably the most original; it takes the "god game" concept that has been so good to Bullfrog and uses it to turn the fantasy roleplaying genre on its ear. In this game, you've got complete control of a classic swords-and-sorcery-style dungeon. You decide how to populate your dank, dark domicile, strategically placing monsters to fend off those pesky heroes who keep invading your privacy. You can view the dungeon from a 3/4 top-down perspective, or put yourself in the thick of things for a first-person tour.



Score! CyberMage, Origin's comic book hero, discovers a tank just waiting for a test drive.

CYBERMAGE

Origin's comic book-inspired action game is a marvel; there's just so much to do. We played this one for just a few minutes, and yet we saw the hero battle his enemies in a tank, then attack on foot, and finally steal a hovercar and take to the sky for some aerial combat. All this action is executed in smooth-scrolling 3D with a first-person perspective, *Doom*-style. Consider the fact that Origin's last few first-person games were *Ultima Underworld I & II* and *System Shock*, and you can understand why we're excited about this one. It looks like it's going to be a blast.



What can we say about *Warcraft II* that we haven't already said five times? It's coming, it looks fantastic...enough said.

WARCRAFT II: TIDES OF DARKNESS

Warcraft: Orcs and Humans was a big favorite in the PC Gamer offices. Its blend of fantasy, strategy, action, and humor earned it an Editors' Choice award, and it looks like the sequel is going to have more of everything that made the original great. *Tides of Darkness* will feature much larger maps, more resources to gather and fight over, and lots of exciting new units, including airships, carriers, and destroyers. We're always cautious about recommending a game this early in its development, but if *Tides of Darkness* isn't one of the best games of the coming year, we'll eat an orc.

nosis, you're going to catch a glimpse of one of those little Lemmings. This time around, we got an eyeful. In the upcoming *Lemmings 3-D* (check out the demo on this month's CD), you'll have to guide a whole herd of the little buggers through a completely new environment, making for some challenging gameplay.

While Lemmings are always a treat, the rest of Psygnosis' lineup looked especially sweet, with two arcade racing games, *Wipeout* and *Destruction Derby*, showing exceptional use of SVGA graphics. For multi-player fun, Psygnosis showed us a rough version of the tank combat game *Assault Rigs*.

And if you think *Ecstatica* is one of the most creative graphic adventures around, that game's creators are hard at work on another ground-breaker, tentatively titled *Urban Decay*. Using the same ellipsoid-modeled graphics and cinematic camera angles as *Ecstatica*, *Urban Decay* won't be a strict adventure game, but an action game where the player must shoot it out with bad guys in a fully rendered city. It's very impressive stuff — an extremely violent game that feels like the movie Sam Peckinpah and John Woo might have directed if they'd ever worked together — but it won't be out until sometime in '96.

QQP

While we have to wonder what gives him such a poor sense of direction, wargamers will be happy to see that the *Lost Admiral* has finally found his way back to the PC with QQP's upcoming *Lost Admiral II: The Admiral's Revenge*. As with the *Perfect General II*, QQP pulled out all the stops in creating *Lost Admiral II*, adding a host of new features that increase playability and difficulty to a delightful new extreme.

Battles in Time has extremes of a different sort, letting players try their hand at commanding major battles throughout history, from the Napoleonic era to the U.S. Civil War and even back to prehistoric times. And with the clever "What if?" options, you'll even be able to send dinosaurs up against the U.S. Cavalry for a truly bizarre gaming experience.

But for something really different, QQP has turned the board game *Awful Green Things From Outer Space* into a fun, family-oriented computer game where players use such outrageous and unique weapons as fire extinguishers, electric fences and those dreaded canisters of Zgwortz in an attempt to stop those Awful Green aliens from invading their spaceship.

Finally, QQP's newest roleplaying game, *Northlands*, is making steady progress towards its December release.

SALES CURVE INTERACTIVE

Sales Curve was quiet when we saw them at the January Consumer Electronics Show, but they came to E3 bringing all their toys. *XS: Shield Up - Fight Back* was the most exciting of the bunch. Its use of Silicon Graphics imagery for a 3D gladiator-style game with 60 computer-generated opponents was impressive, and its multi-player options should make it a hit

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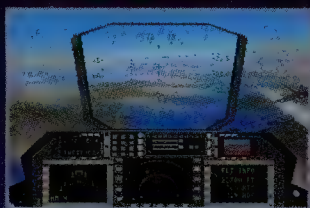
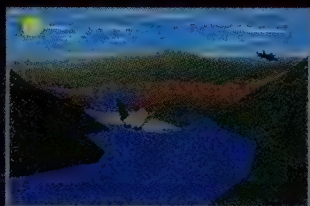
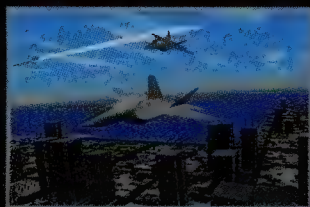


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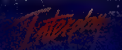
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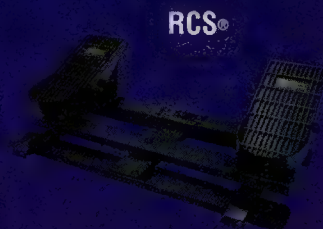
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with the head-to-head crowd. *Kingdom O' Magic* is a downright weird comedy, a graphic adventure that also uses Silicon Graphics models. It's set in Ye Olde Days, but pleasantly devoid of the usual fantasy heroes who take themselves so seriously.

One of the more intriguing sci-fi ideas to become adapted for a PC game is *Gender Wars*. As you might imagine, it's war between the sexes. And we mean war! You can play as a male or female character and kill, kill, kill, until you realize your twisted dream of a unisex planet.

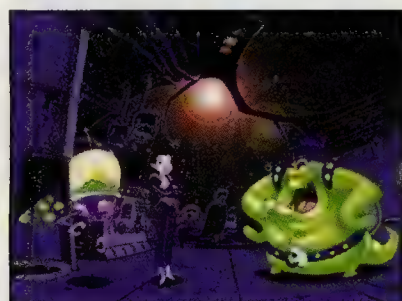
Owning the rights to the *Lawn-mower Man* game license has SCI lining up a new game to capitalize on the Hollywood tie-in. Now that there's a *LM2: Jobe's War* movie in the works, you can expect the PC version in early '96.

SANCTUARY WOODS

Sanctuary Woods debuted two new games at the show. Following up on *Wolf's* success, *Lion* will once again have you looking through the eyes — and living the life — of a cunning predator. It's life on the Serengeti, and the livin' ain't easy.

The other debut was *Orion Burger*, a cartoon adventure that deals with getting along with alien races; well, one race in particular, actually — the owners of a chain called *Orion Burger*. Ever in search of new food sources, they're trying to decide if the human race should be ground up as hamburger meat. It's up to you to convince these alien burger-meisters that humans are an intelligent life form and don't deserve to die. Good luck!

We were pleased to see progress on *Buried in Time: The Journeyman Project 2* and *Ripley's Believe it or Not!: The Riddle of Master Lu*. Both were looking very sharp, and we know it takes time to develop games with such long titles.

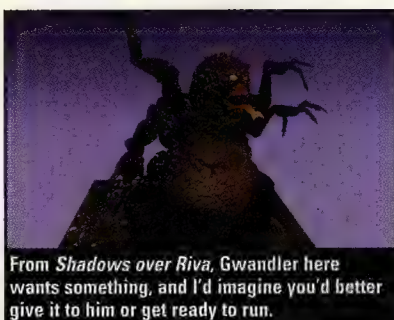


It's the corporate headquarters of Orion Burger. To these guys you look a lot like cattle.

SIR-TECH

There was excitement at Sir-tech's booth over the just-released *Jagged Alliance*. It's been in development so long, we were ready to call it vaporware — but it turned out to be well worth the wait, and now the designers are gearing up to release a multi-player version.

We saw several other titles to get excited about, too. Most notable was *Shadows over Riva*, the sequel to *Star Trail*, which *PC Gamer's* editors named Best Roleplaying Game of 1994. Another RPG on its way is *Druid: Daemons of the Mind*, a really sharp 3D game using 3/4 top-down views and detailed cinematics. And falling into the stunning image



From *Shadows over Riva*, Gwandler here wants something, and I'd imagine you'd better give it to him or get ready to run.

department was *An Odyssey*, a graphic adventure in the *Dragon Lore* vein.

SSI

If you're into wargames and roleplaying, SSI is still the booth to visit if you only have time to visit one. After showing us the latest builds of their great-looking sub sim, *Silent Hunter*, and the *Thunderscape* RPG (both of which should be out as this issue hits the newsstands), SSI kept the hot titles coming.

Due out by August is *Steel Panthers*, the latest from Gary Grigsby, author of such titles as *War in Russia* and *Pacific War*. You control a single tank squad or an entire platoon, along with support units, in both the European and Pacific WWII theaters.

There's an intriguing RPG on its way titled *Entomorph: Plague of the Darkfall*. A plague is transforming all humans into insects, including the game's hero, Kyan. This develops into a race against time. Kyan must find the root of this evil before he becomes a giant mantis-like thingie. The game takes place in the World of Aden, SSI's new roleplaying universe that debuted in *Thunderscape*.

Fans of the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* line should enjoy the latest in the series, *DeathKeep*. It's set on a frozen wasteland with 25 dungeons (8 floors each), gobs of monsters and puzzles, and the usual AD&D stuff.

And what does the more distant future hold for SSI? Well, these titles should give you a clue, and as you can see, they're definitely worth keeping a keen eye on; *Renegade: Return to Jacob's Star*, *Wargame Construction Set III: Ages of Rifles*, and *Allied General*.

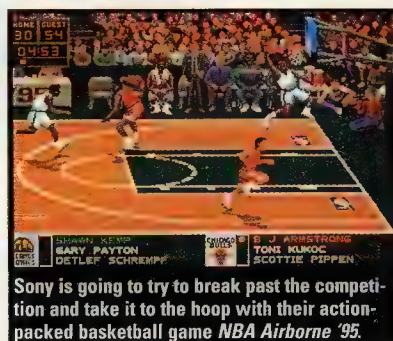
SONY

With Sony's big-budget multimedia adventure *Johnny Mnemonic* already on store shelves to coincide with the even bigger-budget movie release, we half expected this corporate giant to turn all of its attention to pushing its multi-billion-dollar PlayStation video game machine, but that's just not the case.

Sony told us they're dedicated to producing their line of PC titles and intend to keep up the pressure by focusing on the arcade sports market with a series of action-packed games geared to fill the gap between strict simulations and arcade fun. Due out some time in the fall, the first two offerings, *ESPN National Hockey Night* and *NBA Airborne '95*, boast the arcade-style playability of cartridge-based games, balanced with the options and features

you'd expect from a PC game.

And for late in '95, Sony will be offering a sports game that's truly out of the ordinary: *ESPN Extreme Games*, where players get the chance to rollerblade down danger-filled hills or try their hand at skateboarding through obstacle-laden courses.



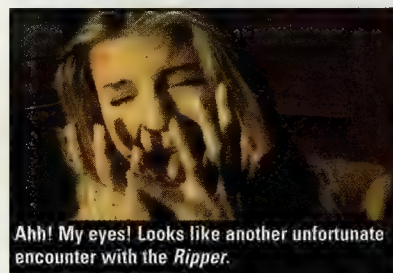
Sony is going to try to break past the competition and take it to the hoop with their action-packed basketball game *NBA Airborne '95*.

TAKE 2

Take 2's new lineup is looking "Dyn-o-mite!", and that's not just because they bagged Jimmy "J.J." Walker for one of their products (but it's always a good reason to say "Dyn-o-mite!"). Jimmy's part of the star-studded cast that will appear in *Ripper*, a game set in a future where the infamous Jack has returned. Other cast members include Christopher Walken, PC game veteran Karen Allen, and John Rhys-Davies (of *Wing Commander III* fame), Burgess "The Penguin" Meredith, Ossie Davis, and Tahnee Welch. Fittingly, this game-noir features the music of Blue Oyster Cult, best known for their rock hit, "Don't Fear the Reaper."

With considerably less video than *Ripper*, *Millennia: Altered Destinies* (pre-viewed in our June issue) is a massive, conquer-the-galaxy game with more than 10,000 possible time/space locations. Using time travel, you shape the development of four alien civilizations. This one comes complete with arcade-style space combat and encounters in the "fifth dimension." Should make fans of *Master of Orion* mighty happy.

We got our first chance to see more than just pictures of *Maximum Roadkill*, a racing-combat game we Scooped as *Thrash Race* in our April issue. Expect to see something playable by the fall.



Ahh! My eyes! Looks like another unfortunate encounter with the *Ripper*.

TEAM 17

Team 17 has been developing games in England for some time, and thanks to Ocean, they're finally getting some attention over here. Team 17 will supply three PC titles through Ocean for '95. A wise move on Ocean's part, considering the

quality of Team 17's games.

Of the three, *Rollcage* seemed the closest to being in the finishing stages. It's a 3D racing game played on set courses, but the trick is to find the best "off-road" short cuts. It features assorted vehicles and many different viewing angles, and Team 17 says it'll run at 70 frames per second on a high-end Pentium.

Worms is a little tougher to describe; it's sort of a combination of *Cannon Fodder* and *Lemmings*. You lead a team of worms against other teams equipped with bazookas, missiles, and other implements of destruction on different battlegrounds ranging from woodlands to snowscapes to a 1970s get-down-funky psychedelic scene. It's a cute game with cute touches; you can give your wriggling soldiers names and celebrate their birthdays — should they live so long. Expect both titles out by Christmas.

TRIMARK INTERACTIVE

Trimark's booth was all abuzz with the recent release of *The Hive*. In this fast-moving arcade game with 3D-rendered graphics, you basically blast your way through mutant bees, and as you can imagine, there are swarms of 'em. The game shows off their Trimark's Panoractive Sequences, which are similar to the kind of rail sequences used in *Creature Shock* (auto-piloted travel allowing gunfire within a fixed screen). The Panoractive technology permits a player 360-degree rotation as well as up and down mobility from a fixed position.

MagBall is another arcade game; it challenges players to race magnetic cars in zero gravity, simulating speeds up to 600 mph inside a 3D arena. The object is to gain control of a magnetic geodisc ball and fire it into an opposing team's goal.



Swarms of mutant bee-men wreak havoc in *The Hive*. Isn't that always the way?

VIACOM

People at the Viacom booth couldn't seem to get enough of *ZOOP*, one of those addictive *Tetris*-like puzzle games. But what the PC Gamer contingent found most interesting was MTV's *Beavis and Butt-Head* in *Virtual Stupidity*. In this one, the dumbnamic duo go through the wringer in an attempt to join their buddy Todd's gang. Another TV series spin-off is *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Harbinger*, an action/adventure game sure to interest any Trekkie.

Viacom is hoping the potential blockbuster summer movie release of *Congo* is a big success. Their game, *Congo: The Movie - Descent into Zinj*, will be riding its coattails. Check out the movie, and you'll



"Hey, Beavis, if we do stuff for Todd, he'll let us in his gang, huh-huh. That would be cool."

have a good idea what this adventure game will be about.

VIC TOKAI

The game we're waiting to see more of from Vic Tokai is *Deadline*. It has a look and feel similar to *X-COM*, but instead of battling marauding aliens, you're dealing with anti-terrorist missions.

The rest of Vic Tokai's lineup is comprised of graphic adventures that have somewhat similar storylines. In *The Scroll*, you deal with the mystery of an ancient Egyptian curse. *Silverload* is a mystery based in an old western town taken over by an evil force. And *Alien Virus 2* deals with the mysterious, evil goings-on in a space station.

VIRGIN

Virgin is huge. They're working with so many developers it's near overwhelming. They even had a private viewing room. And with that hugeness comes lots and lots of games. Ready? *The 11th Hour*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Lands of Lore II*, *Z*, *Screamer*, *Zone Raiders*, *Agile Warrior: F-111X*, *Converse Hardcore Hoops*, *Rivers of Dawn*, *Tri-Tryst*, and *Command & Conquer* are all scheduled for '95 release, and we've probably missed a title or two.

The first thing we did was get tickets to enter their viewing room for a sneak preview of *Heart of Darkness*, where a boy must confront his bedtime demons to survive. It's sort of a *Prince of Persia* using the hottest new animation technology.

While waiting for the sneak preview, we enjoyed a game of *Zone Raiders*, a hovercar combat racing game, and *Screamer*, an arcade auto-racing game that was tough to pull Matt away from.

Another game we were drawn to was *Z*; a science fiction wargame that's part *Warcraft* and part *Perfect General II*. How could it miss?



Hang on, kid! *Heart of Darkness* is a running-climbing-jumping videogame, with an impressive introductory cartoon and good sound.

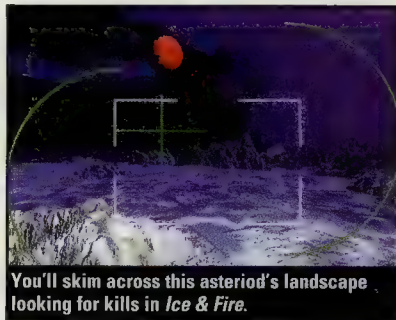
The wildly successful *The 7th Guest*, which set new graphics standards for adventure games, now has a sequel. *The 11th Hour* will continue the spook-inspired mysteries that surround the works of one Henry Stauf, deceased.

There were several arcade games showing at the Virgin booth. *Agile Warrior: F-111X* is a flight shooter/elite squadron/blow up regional targets sort of game. Then there's *Hyper 3D Pinball*, a compilation of six pinball tables with convincing 3D graphics, and *Tri-Tryst*, a tile removing game.

Rivers of Dawn is an RPG where you explore a fantasy universe in search of missing mystical stone fragments. And the sports title *Converse Hardcore Hoops* is a multi-player game that puts a spin on the popular 3-on-3 half-court tournaments held in most cities. The winners meet Larry Johnson's Grandmama (played by Johnson himself) and get to compete against her famous grandson and his friends, Kevin Johnson and J.R. Rider.

With titles such as *Dune II* and *Lands of Lore* under their collective belt, Westwood has done some of the best titles for Virgin. And there's no slowing them down. Westwood's currently working on sequels to both these titles. *Command & Conquer*, based on an update of the *Dune II* engine, should be out by the time you read this. *Lands of Lore II: Guardians of Destiny* continues their evolution in interactive adventures using the awesome 3D-rendered visuals that made *Lands of Lore* so impressive.

And what does the future hold? Well, it seems Virgin has entered into a joint venture to publish an interactive game based on the movie *Blade Runner*, and they're turning to Westwood Studios to develop it.



You'll skim across this asteroid's landscape looking for kills in *Ice & Fire*.

ZOMBIE

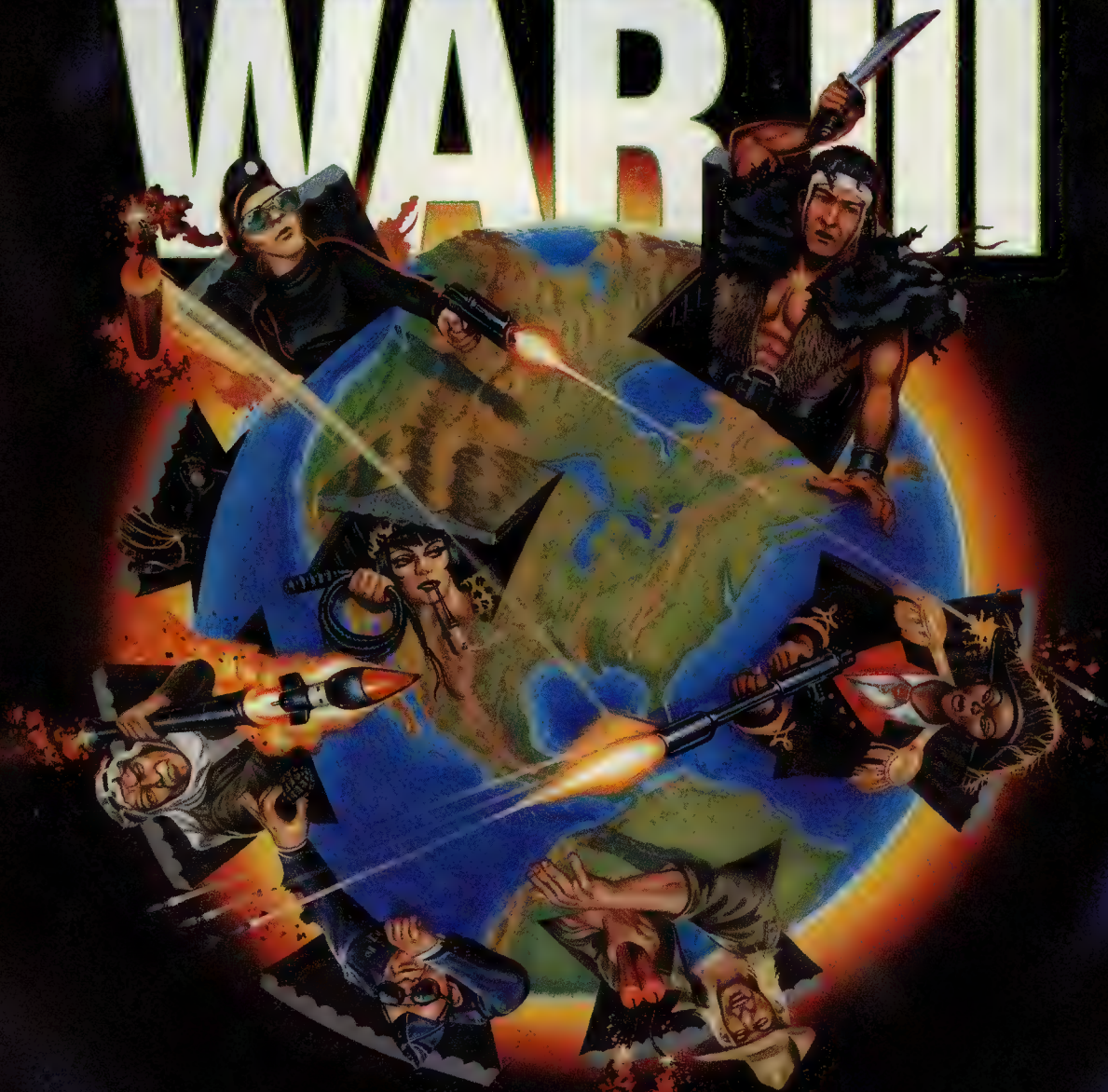
Zombie was the new kid on the block. We ran into them at the GT Interactive booth. GT will be distributing their first two titles, both due out in late '95.

Locus, a fast-paced cybersport, has you driving electromagnetically-powered cycles in a game of elimination. It's one of the first computer games developed specifically for virtual reality headsets.

Zombie's other title, *Ice & Fire*, was developed by Alexey Pajitnov and Vladimir Pokhilko, creators of *Tetris*. In the game, you navigate a spacecraft over an asteroid on tactical flights between stations. When you encounter enemies, it's up to you to decide if you should freeze 'em or torch 'em.

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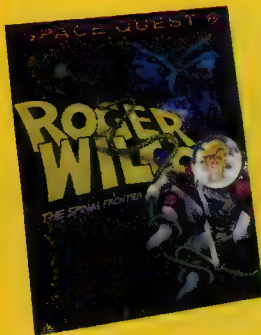
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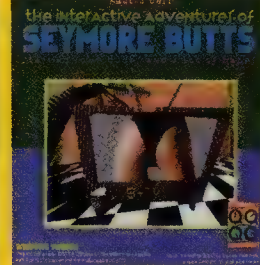
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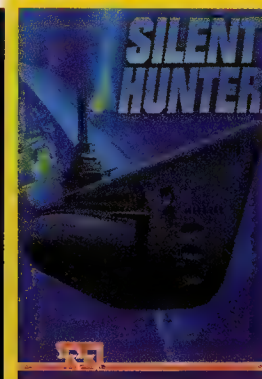
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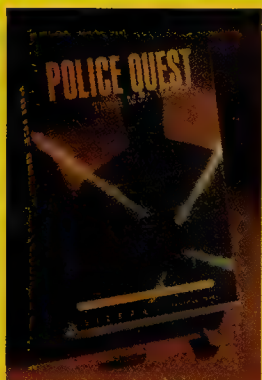
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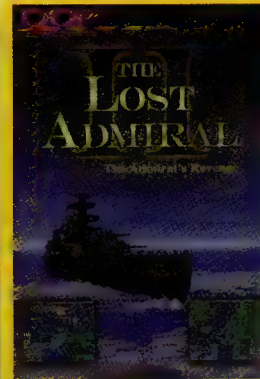
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Night Warriors	\$54
Off World Interceptor	\$52
Panzer Dragoon	\$52
Pebble Beach Golf	\$46
Pinball Arena	\$54
Primal Rage	\$64
RayMan	\$54
Road Rash	\$54
Solar Eclipse	\$52
Space Ace	\$52
Supreme Warrior	\$52
Total Eclipse	\$54
VR Hockey	\$56
Virtua Cop	\$52
Virtua Fighters 2	\$56
Virtua Racing	\$54
X MEN	\$54

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000 AD



1500 AD



2000 AD



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SANCTUARY
WOODS

Gamer-Speak Revisited

Last month's dictionary of PC gaming terms was met with such a wonderfully lukewarm reception, we've decided to do it again!

Back by lack of popular demand, here's the latest installment in our ever-evolving gamer-speak glossary. Snip it out! Save it! Collect 'em all! Trade 'em with friends!

3D-rendered: Refers to high-end 3D graphics created with sophisticated software packages like *3D Studio* or on high-end hardware like a Silicon Graphics computer.

AI: Artificial Intelligence. Refers to the code that controls your computerized opponents in a PC game. A game with really great AI will respond to your moves as if you were playing against another human being.

CRPG: Short for Computer Roleplaying Game.

Editor: A program designed to let you change an existing game. Some editors,

like *XALTER* for *X-COM*, allow you to make a game harder or easier by changing your characters' statistics. Others can be used to significantly change the look and feel of a game; for instance, *DeHackEd* and *DEU* are some of the tools clever hackers have used to create all those new *Doom* levels you can find online and on *PC Gamer's* CD.

General MIDI: MIDI stands for Musical Instrument Digital Interface, an electronic language that lets computers and synthesizers communicate. General MIDI is a standardized set of musical instrument sounds; the theory is that any song written for General MIDI will sound right on any synthesizer compatible with General MIDI, regardless of make or model.

Keyboard: If you don't know what this is, we're not going to tell you.

Rue d'Info: What our Cajun cousins call the Information Superhighway. Known to those of German descent as the *Infostrasse*.

Shareware: Software sold on the honor

system; you download a free game from an online service or get a copy from a friend, and if you like it, you send the developer some money. Shareware publishers rely on the honesty and ethics of their fellow man — despite that, some of them have become quite wealthy. *Doom* is the all-time grand champion of shareware games; until recently, it was only available as shareware, and yet it made the guys at id Software a humongous wad of dough.

Shovelware: The practice of putting several old, inferior games on a CD-ROM and selling them at bargain-basement prices to unsuspecting gamers.

TSR: Terminate and Stay Resident. Refers to programs that load into memory and stay there even while you run other programs. A pop-up mixer to control your sound card is a popular TSR.

Vaporware: Software that never appears on store shelves, despite repeated promises from the publisher. *Harvester*, previewed in our very first issue more than a year ago and still unreleased, is a good example.

Hardware Requirements

With each *PC Gamer* review, you'll find two very important pieces of information: the game's minimum hardware requirements, and the hardware configurations we recommend as the *least* you'll need to really enjoy the game. While a game will run on the minimum system the manufacturer specifies, it might not run all that well. Because of this, we test each game on several systems so we can bring you a more realistic assessment of what you'll *really* need.

THE PC GAMER RATINGS SYSTEM

100%-90% Classic

Not many games can earn a rating over 90%, and even fewer can approach the magic 100. Anything that we rate over 90% is an instant classic — a game that's truly significant in both content and design, and one that we'd recommend without reservation to anyone interested in PC gaming.

89%-80% Excellent

These are excellent games. Anything that scores in this range is well worth your attention, though it may not make any significant advances over its rivals. Also, some genuine benchmark games of decidedly specialist taste will fall into this area — it may be the best 7th Cavalry simulation on the market, but not all of us want to relive Little Bighorn.

79%-70% Very Good

Good games, which we'd recommend to fans of the particular genre

— although there are probably better games out there.

69%-60% Good

A reasonable, above-average game. It may be worth buying, but probably has a few significant flaws.

59%-50% Fair

Very ordinary games. Not completely worthless, but not a very good way to spend your gaming dollar, either.

49%-40% Below Average

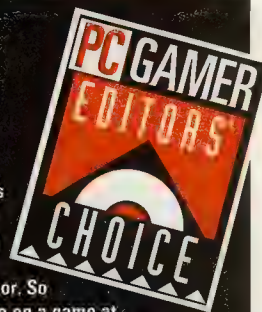
Poor quality. Only a few, slightly redeeming features keep them from falling into the abyss of the next category...

39%-0% Don't Bother

Just terrible games — and the lower you go, the worse they get. Avoid these titles like the Black Plague — and don't say we didn't warn you!

PC Gamer Editors' Choice Awards

Each and every month, we honor the best games we see — those earning 88% or above — with our coveted Editors' Choice award. It's not easy to earn the Editors' Choice, and there are a lot of excellent games that fall just short of the honor. So when you see the PC Gamer Editors' Choice logo on a game at your local software shop, you can bet it's among the best of the best.



Woodruff and the Schnibble



Full Throttle



Category: Graphic Adventure

Developer: LucasArts Entertainment

Publisher: LucasArts Entertainment,
P.O. Box 10307, San Rafael,
CA 94912 (800) 782-7927

Required

Double-speed CD-ROM drive;
486DX/33MHz; 8MB RAM; DOS 5.0 or later; 1MB hard-drive space; VGA

We Recommend

486DX2/66MHz; Local Bus or PCI video card; Mouse; Supported sound cards

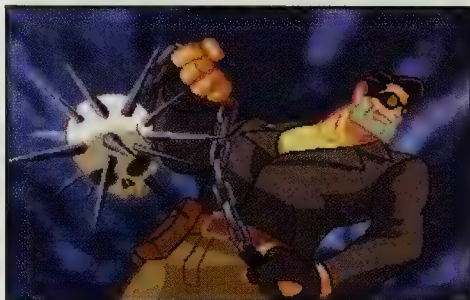
M.S.R.P.: \$49.99

We've all heard the saying "You never get a second chance to make a first impression," but apparently the LucasArts' team that worked on *Full Throttle* took it a little more seriously than most of us do. They must have, because the opening sequence they created is one of the most stunningly effective I've seen in a game, and for a

moment or two, I honestly felt as though I were watching the start of an animated feature film — and a good one at that.

Plenty of games start with a bang and end with a whimper, but *Full Throttle*'s not one of them. This is a rollercoaster ride of an adventure, a stylistic masterpiece that truly deserves the "interactive cartoon" moniker. From start to finish, every element — plot, score, characters, dialog, artwork, animated cut scenes, and soundtrack — works together almost perfectly, creating an astounding experience that feels as much like a movie as it does a game.

But while *Full Throttle* is a rollercoaster ride, it's also a pretty short one.



■ Whenever Ben picks up a new weapon on the Mine Road, you hear a crunching power chord and see a cut scene like this one. *Very cool.*

What kind of game does a 200-pound biker choose to star in? Any one he wants to, of course.



■ Wouldn't you know it? As soon as you find the keys to your bike and hit the road, you run into a Rottweiler! After he's finished talking trash, just ease your Corley to the right and start punching.

Veteran gamers can expect to finish the game in under seven or eight hours, while newcomers can look forward to about double the gaming. In fact, if all you care about is duration of gameplay, you'll probably be a bit disappointed. But if you'd like to see just how sophisticated and exciting computer gaming can be, you really should give it a try.

Set sometime in the future, *Full Throttle* is the story of Ben, leader of a motorcycle gang called the Polecats. The Polecats ride Corley motorcycles, so it's only fitting that the game opens with Ben driving his hog onto a hovercraft carrying the president of Corley Motors, Malcolm Corley, to a shareholders meeting. A biker himself, Corley orders his limo driver to follow the gang because he likes their style a lot.

But Adrian Ripburger, vice-president of Corley Motors, is also in the limo, and he's got other plans. After asking Ben to have the Polecats "escort" the limo to the meeting, Ripburger has his thugs bushwhack Ben and toss him in a dumpster. The rest of the Polecats, are left thinking Ben has agreed to Ripburger's proposal, and follow Corley's limo on to the meeting.

Ben eventually catches up with his buddies, but not before Ripburger murders Corley and makes it look as though the Polecats — Ben in particular — are responsible. And with Corley out of the way, Ripburger plans to cease production of Corley motorcycles in order to

Bad to the Bone

Get / Use Look Talk Kick



There's no doubt about it: This is the coolest interface ever!

manufacture minivans. Your goal: clear Ben of the murder rap, and expose Ripburger to the shareholders.

One of the first things that sucks you into the action is the soundtrack. LucasArts hired the Gone Jackals ("an authentic hard-hammerin' biker band!") to do much of the music in the game, and the results are incredible. Nearly every song complements the action on-screen, from the staccato guitar riff of the opening number ("Legacy") to the two-chord rocker that plays as Ben cruises the highway. It's the best soundtrack I've heard, hands-down, and adds

If it Was a Snake, it Would've Bitten You...

You may have finished *Full Throttle*, but did you find all the in-jokes and references that LucasArts put into the game? Most are easy to spot — if you're *really* paying attention, that is.

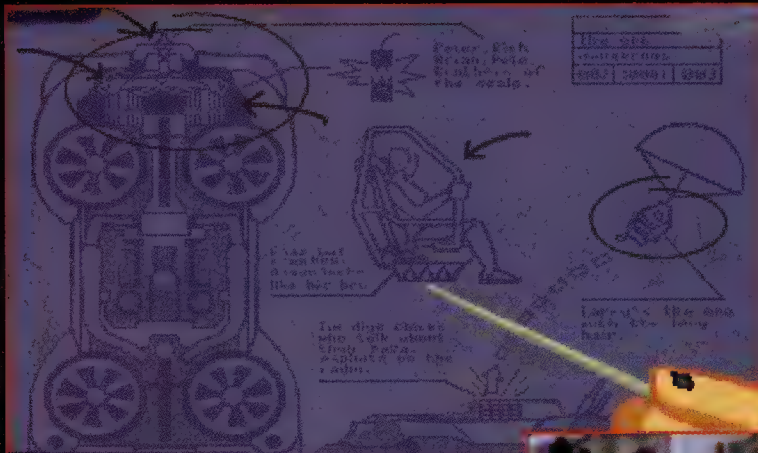
One of the funniest is when Ben finds Miranda in the dumpster behind the Kickstand Bar. After explaining how she took some incriminating photos of Adrian Ripburger, Miranda cries, "Help me, Ben, you're my only hope!" — the same words the hologram of Princess Leia said to Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars*.

Another movie reference comes when Ben's trying to stop the cargo plane the Vultures have converted into a massive over-the-road vehicle, but because of the trial-and-error nature of the puzzle many players won't see it. Buried in a series of sub-menus is a Self-Destruct option that's activated by the code words "Purity of

Help me, Ben, you're my only hope!

What's Princess Leia doing in a dumpster? And why does Luke have on a leather jacket and a severe case of five o'clock shadow?

If you're a fan of *Dr. Strangelove*, you won't have any problem figuring out the self-destruct code on the Vulture's plane/truck.



The drawings on this diagram detail how Ben and Mo plan to turn the tables on Ripburger at the Demolition Derby, but a closer look shows that it also contains a list of revealing comments.

Essence" — the same code used by Sterling Hayden in *Dr. Strangelove* to prevent the Pentagon from recalling the bombers he's sent to Russia to start World War III.

Two of my favorite inside jokes pop up at the Demolition Derby. As the announcer introduces Ben and Mo, you see two other drivers whose names aren't mentioned, one of whom looks to be none other than George Lucas himself. (Check out the picture to the right —



Considering his driving style, it's appropriate that a drawing of Max (of *Sam and Max Hit the Road* fame) shows up on the walls of the Smash-a-Torium.

what do you think?) And fans of *Sam and Max Hit the Road* will be happy to see the likeness of that game's lunatic lepus plastered right on the walls of the Smash-a-Torium.



This unnamed Demolition Derby contestant looks a lot like George Lucas. Nah, couldn't be...

immensely to the movie-like ambience of the graphics and plot.

The voice acting, too, is outstanding. Roy Conrad, the voice of Ben, is superb in his characterization of the slow-to-anger biker who just wants a little peace of mind; in fact, he *almost* steals the show. That honor, however, goes to Mark Hamill, who does the voice of Ripburger and two other characters in the game, none of which sound remotely alike (or even like Mark Hamill, for that matter).

Compared to most graphic adventures, the puzzles you'll have to solve here are pretty simple — find item A to



Maureen's eager to fix Ben's bike, but first he's got to dig up a few parts. Luckily, she can give you tips on where to start looking.

use on item B. But complicated problems wouldn't really fit the theme of this game. Ben's a biker, and he really prefers the direct approach whenever possible — if he needs to get into a locked room, for example, your best bet is to try kicking the door down. There's one annoying trial-and-error affair near the end of the game, but otherwise you shouldn't find yourself stuck very often or for very long.

The only time *Full Throttle* slows down is when Ben's cruising a lonely stretch of road, duking it out with a series of bikers equipped with various types of weapons. The problem is that you can't avoid combat, even if you know ahead of time that you don't have the weapon you need to beat a certain enemy.

A lot of players are going to be wary of buying *Full Throttle* because they've heard it's too short. But if you'd like to see just how far computer games have come, you really ought to pick it up. Even if you wait a month or two for the price to go down, you'll be amazed.

—Steve Poole



Nothing like a shot of the hard stuff after a long day on the road! Then again, if Ben knew the trouble that was headed his way, he'd make it a double.

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: A head-long adventure that will take your breath away from the very start.

LOWS: Veteran players will finish the game fairly quickly, and gameplay is rigidly linear; arcade sequences can get old pretty fast.

BOTTOM LINE: It may be a little short, but it's one wild ride while it lasts.

90%

IT CAME FROM THE EIGHTIES!

The Sequel That's Already A Classic.

Just when you thought it was safe to go back onto your PC...Activision spawns Action Pack 2! Witness the return of fifteen more pulse-pounding video games from the dawn of gaming — now in Windows™! It's Part Two of Activision's Atari 2600 video game collection — back with the same riveting graphics and gripping sound effects of the originals. Activision's Atari 2600 Action Pack 2 — more addictive fun than you remember!



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ACTIVISION®

Product Information Number 84

Iron Assault

Category: Robot combat simulation

Developer: Graffiti Software

Publisher: Virgin Interactive Entertainment,
18061 Fitch Ave., Irvine,
CA 92714 (714) 833-1999

Required

486/33; 4 MB RAM
(3 MB EMS); DOS
5.0; 256 color VGA;
mouse; CD-ROM
drive; 3 MB hard-
drive space

We Recommend

Joystick; rudder
pedals; Sound-
Blaster compatible
card; modem or null
modem cable

M.S.R.P.: \$59.95

As much as I love high-tech machinery and massive weapons of assault and destruction, I've never fallen under the spell of the BattleTech mystique. While the concept is cool — towering, bipedal war robots manned by skilled human pilots — I could never get past the essential impracticality of their design, and how easy they must have been to tip over.

Still, the category seems to have a life of its own, beginning with Activision's *MechWarrior* and running up through Virtual World Entertainment's BattleTech Centers. We've seen NovaLogic's *Ultrabots* (attractive, but gameplay was muddled and somewhat illogical); Simutronics' *Cyberstrike* (the online game, which makes up for its graphic simplicity with multi-player excitement), and most recently Dynamix's one-two *Metaltech* punch — the mechanized arena combat of *BattleDrome*, and then *EarthSiege*. A lot of time, and a number of titles. But

whether you call 'em Mechs, Bots, or Hercs, the song remains essentially the same.

It's therefore no surprise that Virgin's new entry, *Iron Assault*, doesn't have much to distinguish it from the rest of the pack. At best, it's a marginally less cultivated version of *EarthSiege* (a campaign and mission-based structure); at worst, it's sometimes as incomprehensible as *Ultrabots*.

Your missions take you through cities and over desert, mountain, and arctic terrain, with the ultimate goal of reclaiming the world for democracy. You're briefed and given objectives, you select and arm your Machine (FASA snatched away the game's original title, *Mech Commander*, and Graffiti apparently never bothered to come up with a snappy new name for their robots) and are then dropped into the combat zone.

To be honest, the desert, mountain, and frozen wasteland scenarios look awful. They're mostly murky and featureless, and the enemy war machines' animations are absolutely primitive. The city scenarios are great fun, though, especially in serial or modem play, as your Machine clomps down the generic building-lined streets of Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia, crushing cars and lampposts and doing more than a little collateral damage to the architecture.

By carefully using your radar, maps, and doing a little strategic planning, you'll achieve many victories — which make new technologies available (weapons and up to ten different robot Machines) and bring advancement in both rank and responsibility. Eventually you'll get to command a squadron of three other units in addition to your own unit.

The one thought I kept having while playing *Iron Assault* was what an outstanding Amiga game it would have been. It makes economic, effective use of video clips, and it has that certain look, that sound and feel, common to so many Commodore classics, but which strangely lose

First, it was the Dance of the Doom Clones; now "mech" way for another entry in the Miss BattleTech Pageant...



An enemy war Machine rounds a corner in Da Windy City A Chicaga.

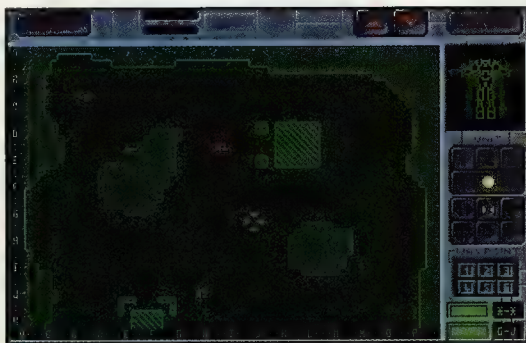


Logged on to the World Net Computer, you can choose and outfit your Machine for the upcoming mission.

their appeal on the PC.

No single one of these Battling Bot games captures the full potential of the genre, although some come closer than others; perhaps the upcoming *MechWarrior 2* will remedy that. In the mean time, if the idea of driving a 50 foot tall walking tank appeals to you, *Iron Assault* may be enough for you. It's not a bad game — but it's not a distinctively good one, either.

—Scott Wolf



Use the in-game map to recon the mission area, set your waypoints, and control the movements of your squadron (the radio works, too).

PC GAMER

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Easy to manage; fun for two players in the city scenarios.

LOWS: Primitive enemy animation and ill-conceived play areas.

BOTTOM LINE: Pretend it's an old Amiga game, and you'll love it.

74%



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mutiny and vicious battles with rival ships, you may be lucky enough to reach the New World. However, your

world? How about beneath it? There are those who have

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© 1995 Interactive Magic

Product Information Number 112

Zig-Zag

Category: Puzzle game

Developer: Castaway Software

Publisher: Quantum Quality Productions,
495 Highway 202, Flemington,
NJ 08822 (908) 788-2799

Required

CD-ROM drive;
386/25 MHz;
Windows 3.1 or
higher; 4MB RAM;
3MB hard-drive
space; VGA

We Recommend

Double-speed CD-
ROM drive;
Supported sound
card

M.S.R.P.: \$49.95

Originally published in 1972 as "My Word!", *Zig-Zag* proved wildly popular, selling more than 100,000 units in its paper-and-pencil configuration. When it was reissued in 1982 under its current title, it was hailed as a classic word game, and it has appeared regularly on *Games Magazine's* "Top 100 Games" list ever since.

Now available for Windows, *Zig-Zag* should do equally well as a computer game. It's a classic time-waster: as with *Tetris*, you cannot play "just one game." It'll suck you into a time-war and, by the time reality

The search for "The Next Tetris" goes on.

Zig-Zag is a definite contender, though, and should please a wide audience.

intrudes again, you'll be amazed at how many hours have passed.

The idea is elegantly simple: the computer picks a secret word (from 4 to 7 letters, with 9 difficulty-levels), represented by empty letter-boxes at the top of the screen, then lines up a varying number of blank "test words" beneath it.

The player then types in a test word (using vowels first, of course, for obvious reasons) and the computer awards points according to how useful the letters in that word are toward solving the puzzle-word. A "Zig" is worth 1000 points and is awarded each time you find a letter that is not only in the secret word, but is in the same position as it appears in the test word. A "Zag" gets you 250 points and denotes a letter that does appear, but in a different position.

Since the object is not only to guess the secret word, but also to rack up high scores, you'll quickly become obsessed with finding test words that not only give you additional 1000-point Zigs, but that also can help you zero-in on the puzzle word.

You can keep track of which letters you've used by clicking to access an alphabet screen during the game — a convenient feature, but really no more



Quest games feature colorful Hawaiian motifs and offer a different kind of challenge.

helpful than taking notes on a pad.

Zig-Zag features several different takes on its puzzles including a "secret number" variant on the basic game, but this didn't hold my attention very long; it's just more fun to play with words.

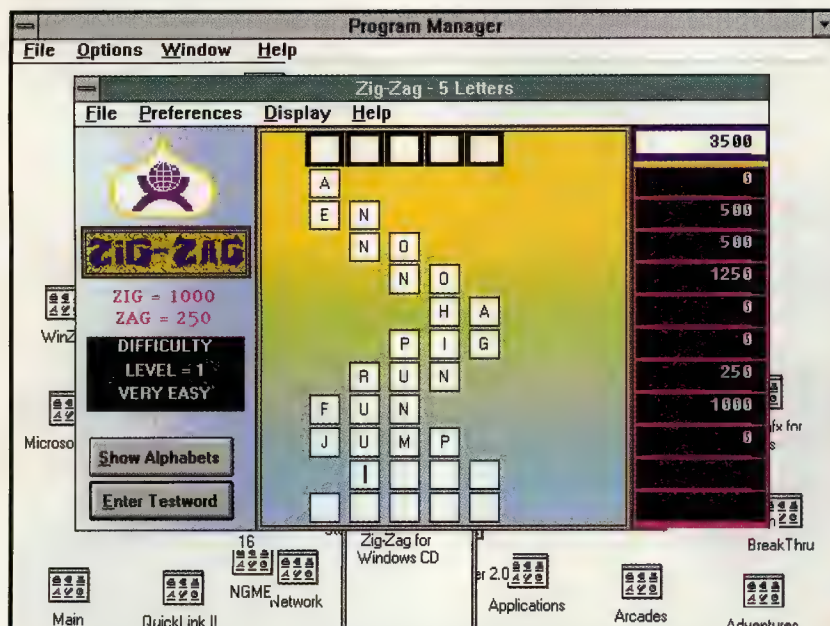
And then there's a challenging series of quest games in which your progress across the quest screen is measured by your success or failure at solving individual puzzles.

I did not care too much for the quest-games; after the elegance of the basic games, they seemed labored and cumbersome. Others players may very well have just the opposite reaction — certainly the quest-game concept offers an additional plateau of challenge which *Zig-Zag* addicts will want to explore.

QQP has dressed this simple pencil-and-paper game in bright, colorful graphics (a charming Hawaiian motif prevails, since the original game was developed by Hawaiian games-meister Joli Kansil, who holds the copyright to 30 published games), and added snappy sound effects.

No doubt about it: *Zig-Zag* has all the stuff to become a PC classic — simple to grasp, fiendishly hard to master, and so addictive that the FDA will probably ban it six months from now. You know how those guys can be...

—William R. Trotter



Try for high scores by using "zig" letters in identical spaces in as many test words as you can devise.

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: A classy brain-teaser that will challenge even the most experienced word-game maven.

85%

LOWS: The quest variants didn't turn me on, although others will surely respond differently.

BOTTOM LINE: A crossword puzzle with attitude — if you play one game and like it, you'll be hooked.

Super Street Fighter II Turbo

Category: Fighting game

Developer: Capcom

Publisher: GameTek, 2999 Northeast 191st Street, Suite 500, North Miami Beach, FL 33180 (305) 935-3995

Required

Double-speed CD-ROM; 486/25; 4MB RAM; 30MB hard-drive space; VGA

We Recommend

486DX2/66; 8MB RAM; Supported sound card; Gamepad

M.S.R.P.: \$59.95

Despite having one of the most annoying titles in the history of gaming, *Super Street Fighter II Turbo* is a giant step forward for PC fighting games. Though it's not the first time the *Street Fighter* name has appeared on a PC, this is a far cry from the pathetic jerks and lousy animations that crippled Hi-tech Expressions' translation of the original *SFII*. Gametek's developers have managed to bring all of the action, playability, and fun of the arcade stand-up to the PC without cutting any corners.

This time, the World Warriors are up against a completely new foe, the dreaded Akuma. Oddly enough, he (like every other villain) has decided that he just can't go on living without beating the bejezus out of the *Street Fighter* gang. But he'll have more than just the standard cast of characters to deal with. Four newcomers have appeared on the scene to join the somewhat quarrelsome team:



Deejay is a well balanced addition who's perfect for new players.

It's here! It's late! But *Super Street Fighter II Turbo* finally slugs its way to the PC with all of the style and flash of the coin-op.

Cammy, a British special agent who'll make you forget about Chun-Li; Dee-Jay, a Jamaican kick-boxing fanatic; T. Hawk, a Native American who has the strength of five men; and Fei Long, a Bruce Lee look-alike with a host of agile moves. You can also choose to play as any of the boss characters from the original game, with all of their attacks and special moves. After all's said and done, you're left with a total of sixteen different fighters to choose from.

One of the first things you'll notice about *SSFIIIT* is its clean look. The graphics are exactly like those found in the arcade, and use the same fluid style that made the original a hit.

The animation is just as impressive, taking each of the characters through a score of different positions without so much as a flicker. The character closeups use the angular art style created for the update, showing off your favorite fighters in an intense new light. Sound is also crisp and aggressive, with enough effects to keep even the pickiest pugilist happy for hours.

Yet, regardless of how the game looks, it's the fighting that makes *SSFIIIT* such a treat to play. New moves have been added for every character, including Zangief's new glowing hand attack, Chun Li's fireball, Ryu's red fireball, and Dhalsim's yoga inferno. Then there's the super-combos for each character that unleash a devastating attack on opponents with brutal consequences. And while a lot of these moves require some pretty ridiculous controller motion to pull off, with practice (and a Gravis pad) there's nothing here that can't be mastered eventually.

For those players who got tired of long, drawn out battles in the arcade, there's a new turbo option that allows for play at three different speeds. In the end there are enough new features to ensure that the game stands apart from its predecessors.



Blanka's roll makes him hard to attack from above, and his unsightly orange skin and green hair make him hard to look at.



With 16 fighters to choose from, there are hours worth of new play combinations.

The only downside to the whole translation is that it's so horribly dated now. Most fighting game fanatics have long since gotten over their *Street Fighter* cravings to play *MKII*, or are preparing to take on the three dimensional challenges of *FX Fighter*. And as good as it is, *Super Street Fighter II Turbo* is probably too far behind the curve to appeal to the cutting edge gamer. But if you haven't tried your hand at the original yet, or if you just can get enough of this classic 2D fighting game, this is exactly what you've been looking for.

—Trent C. Ward

PC GAMER

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Great graphics, solid control, white-knuckle fighting action.

LOWS: All of this still isn't enough to bring a very old, 2D fighting game up to today's standards.

BOTTOM LINE: A great translation of the arcade game, if you're still interested in trying it.

78%

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Tank Commander

Category: Arcade

Developer: Big Red Software

Publisher: Domark Software, 1900 S. Norfolk Street, Suite 110, San Mateo, CA (415) 513-8929

Required

Double-speed CD-ROM; 486/25; 4MB RAM; 4MB hard-drive space; DOS 6.0 or greater; EMS

We Recommend

486/50; 16 MB RAM; Supported sound card; 9600-baud modem or above

M.S.R.P.: \$54.95

After the disappointment of NovaLogic's *Armored Fist*, I came to Domark's new *Tank Commander* import looking for a solid tank sim that could compare to MicroProse's classic *Tank Platoon*. What I got was a first-person shooter in a tank. Like a kid hoping for Ringling Brothers and getting Cirque de Soleil, I knew I was in for something far less than I had anticipated when I turned a page in the documentation and came across a section headed "Power Ups."

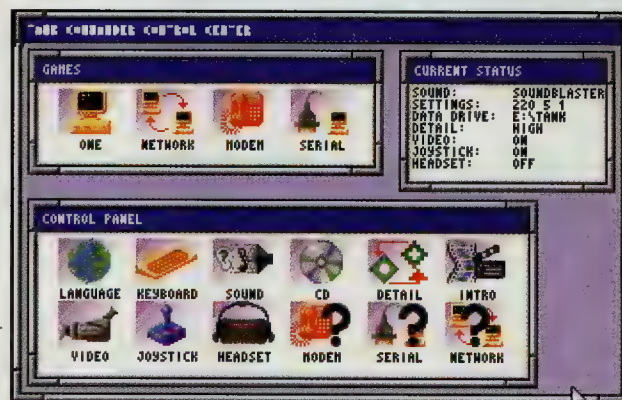
Oh yes, now I remember those famous "power ups" that U.S. Armored Cav troops found lying around the desert as they raced for Kuwait. They just drove over them and restored their shattered armor, cured their injuries, replaced depleted ammunition, and — holy cow! — even increased the range and power of their weapons and called in air strikes! Just lying around! In the

desert! No wonder we won...

Tank

Commander starts off with what just might be the ugliest and most bass-ackwards menu in memory, where you'll use a series of hideous and largely unnecessary icons placed on a white background to configure your game options. A few ugly screens later brings you to crew selection.

There are four men in a crew, and twelve men to pick from altogether. But since absolutely no stats or descriptions are available for crew members, the only difference is in the picture and the name. So basically, you just pick who you think has an honest face. It makes you wonder why they even bothered including crew selection, if the differences between soldiers aren't even worth mentioning.



■ We have a winner! The ugliest game shell of the year.



■ Odd locations like Stonehenge are included to remind us that the developers are British. There are seven locations in all.



■ There are little video clips of your crew yelling warnings, but they don't actually do anything.

Next come the scenario sets. There are seven locations and setups altogether, with room for later expansion disks. Ranging from Beginner to Advanced, these include Desert Campaign, Archipelago (a sort of marshy location), Arctic Station, Urban Assault (they made it a night mission, so you can't really see the buildings very well), Fortress Invasion (a landing force scenario), Volcanic Island (a

variety of terrains), and Night Rescue (night ops again). Each of these includes a number of missions based around scenarios (terrorism, infiltration, etc.) with their own objectives. There are no save functions whatsoever, so the game tracks what mission you last completed in a particular scenario and returns you there at startup.

After selecting a mission and going through a debriefing, there is a long pause and then — huh? — a title sequence, complete with three developer logos, a grainy animated scene, and full credits. After this, you're re-briefed on the scenarios you were just briefed on, spend a good minute waiting for the mission to load, and then pop right into the action, often being fired on with lethal force the second it starts.

After all that, you end up with gameplay that's a huge let-down. You

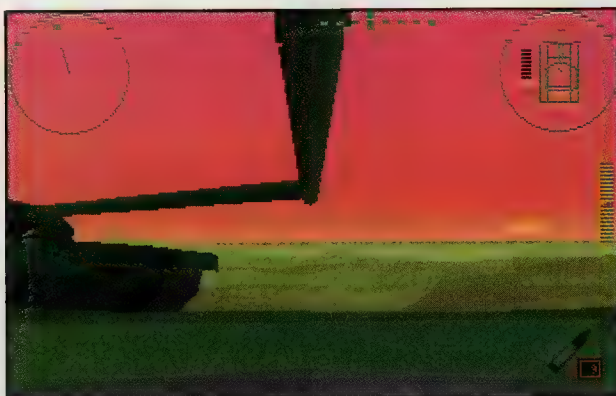


■ A buggy from the gunner's POV. The graphics in *Tank Commander* are occasionally good, but it's not enough to outweigh the awkward controls and stupid tank crews.

command up to four tanks in any number of missions, from rescue to search-and-destroy. A tactical recon screen allows for paths to be set for each tank in the group, including your own (which means the tanks can be driven while you fire: something *Armored Fist* could have used). But while the idea makes sense, the problems are: a) the tank crews are thick-headed, so you'll have to jump from tank to tank during combat; and b) there is only one waypoint, so you either travel in a straight line or keep resetting waypoints. You can get a pretty good overview of the situation from this screen (though the zoom only worked occasionally on mine), and even send a "chopper cam" up to scout ahead for you.

All this might make it seem like there's a strategy element to *Tank Commander*, but there isn't. It is, very simply, a shooting game. You shoot at people. You shoot at vehicles. You move on. Repeat if necessary. That's it. No nuances, no levels of realism or difficulty, all of which is compounded by the fact that many missions begin with the tank in the heat of action, as though tanks were beamed into a hot area and expected to come out firing.

Tank Commander doesn't even try to bring realism into the picture. Trajectory? What's that? Doesn't that mean that the barrel has to be elevated higher than the target in order to hit it? It sounds too confusing, so let's just pretend it doesn't exist and have you fire dead on at anything you want to hit. Just set them cross-hairs on the center of the target and fire. What else could players weaned on *Doom* and its clones want? What about the laws of physics, you ask? Pshaw.



■ A tank at close range from the driver's view. Did you know you that you can fire at a tank from three feet away and not suffer any collateral damage? Neither did I.

The graphics are occasionally good, occasionally bad, with a number of viewing options that allow you to watch all of the carnage you're creating. But *Tank Commander* is still just an arcade game, and not the long-awaited Next Great Tank Sim. It's better than *Armored Fist*, with stronger playability and better visuals, but a sim it is not. *Tank Commander* will be fun for those who're starving for more multi-player first-person shooting, but in the end it fails on too many levels to be considered a success.

—T. Liam McDonald

PC GAMER

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Some good features (way points, helicopter views), and multi-player action.

LOWS: Inconsistent graphics and sound quality, thick headed crews, awkward controls.

BOTTOM LINE: A fair action game, but certainly not a sim or strategy title.

69%

The Weapons of Tank Commander

There's no shortage of things to shoot at or with in *Tank Commander*. All kinds of weapons and shells are packed into your tank, and though some seem pretty vague and improbable, they all do lots of damage.

Co-axial machine gun:

Your one-stop infantry and jeep killer. Just spray the horizon with bullets like a space marine from *Doom* and you'll kill some vaguely human-shaped things firing guns at you.

Normal Shells:

Normal is relative, I guess, but in *Tank Commander*, these are your basic "girlie man" shells which do minimal damage against vehicles.

High Explosive Shells (H.E.A.T.):

These are supposed to be your High-Explosive Anti-Tank shape-charged shells. In the game, these are your medium weapons.

Armor Piercing Shell:

Your "big shells," which do maximum damage against tanks. I'm not sure what these are supposed to represent, since H.E.A.T. is also an armor piercing shell, but here they are.

Mine Destroyer:

Again, I'm not exactly sure *what* this represents, but it does destroy mines (at least that's what it's supposed to do).

Homing Missile:

Another mystery weapon (is it supposed to be a TOW?). Less powerful but more accurate than normal shells.

Flame Thrower:

Short range, but turns those infantry folks into crispy critters.

A-10 Air Strike:

In some scenarios you can call in an air strike to sweep the area immediately before you. May also damage your objectives, however.

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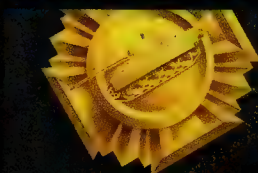
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Product Information Number 90

Blood Bowl

Category: Strategy

Developer: Destiny Software Productions

Publisher: MicroLeague, 1001 Millersville Rd., Lancaster, PA 17604
(717) 872-6567

Required

Double-speed CD-ROM drive;
486SX/25; 4MB RAM; 15MB hard drive space; VGA

We Recommend

486DX2/50; 8MB RAM; Mouse; Sound Blaster or supported sound card

M.S.R.P.: \$59.95

It's a good idea. Simple, but clever; one of those high-concept things that'd make a good pitch in a Hollywood producer's office. "It's football, see, but it's set in the far future, with fantasy characters like Orcs, Elves, and Undead."

As anyone familiar with the original Games Workshop board game knows, *Blood Bowl* is a strange, violent strategy game set in the Warhammer roleplaying universe. As in football, the idea is to carry an inflated animal skin into the opponent's end zone—but in *Blood Bowl*, almost anything goes. Spiked helmets and shoulder pads are sanctioned, and fangs and claws are as common as Stick-um and Ace bandages. You can even stomp on a fallen opponent in the hope of dealing an injury that'll keep him out of the game, disable him for the rest of the season, or kill him outright.

In other words, *Blood Bowl* is almost as brutal as Australian Rules Football.

Blood Bowl has a lot of elements you'd expect to find in a serious sports simulation: it lets you view statistics; make substitutions; trade players and claim free agents; and coach a team

***Blood Bowl* finally made its way to the PC — although it probably won't make fans of the miniatures game stop painting those trolls.**

through a full season.

But that's where the similarities end; no one is going to mistake this game for *Front Page Sports: Football*. For one thing, *Blood Bowl* isn't exactly action-packed. You don't grab a joystick and run your players downfield in real-time; this is a turn-based game. You select your players and give them movement commands via the mouse or keyboard, X-COM-style. Your turn continues until all your players have used up their movement allowances or until a turnover occurs—then you sit and watch the computer take its turn.

That's where the game gets a little tedious; the computer can take as much as two minutes pondering its position and moving its players. That might not sound like a lot of time, but try spending it watching little sprites creep across the screen, and you'll realize just how long two minutes can feel. And since your own turn will often end quickly when one of your blockers is knocked down or your runner drops the ball, you can sometimes spend more time watching the computer do its thing than you spend actually playing the game.

The lack of action is understandable, considering *Blood Bowl*'s origins. But a PC adaptation of a board game should bring something new to the equation, something that couldn't be done except on a computer. *Blood Bowl* does a little of this, but only on a skin-deep level. There's an instant-replay feature that kicks in after a good play, for instance, and a couple of announcers occasionally chime in with digitized speech.

There's also a computer opponent, of course, which is nice if you're a *Blood Bowl* enthusiast and can't find a living player to match wits against. But the game's AI is pretty darn predictable and doesn't take full advantage of the players' special traits and abilities, so it doesn't present too much of a challenge after a couple of games.

Blood Bowl is much more interesting with two human players. Unfortunately, that brings us to another sore point. Two gamers can go head-to-head for a game of *Blood Bowl* at the same computer, but there's no modem support for remote play. That wouldn't normally be a problem; despite what trends might indicate, a game doesn't have to include modem support to be entertaining. But the *Blood Bowl* box says the game



Instant replay sequences repeat a play with animations rendered in a nice three-quarters, top-down perspective. Too bad the actual game couldn't be played this way.

includes modem play! Just like with New World Computing's *Zephyr*, it's only when you've bought the game, taken it home, and opened the box that you find a slip of paper informing you there is no modem support because the programmers haven't finished it yet. MicroLeague has promised the modem module will be shipped to registered *Blood Bowl* owners as soon as it's finished, but this is still another case of a company releasing a product that's clearly unfinished.

Still, for strategy or sports gamers looking for something different, *Blood Bowl* certainly fits the bill. And for fans of the board game, it's a must. Since it's based on an established game, all the rules and play elements are well worked out. So, aside from the long waits during the computer opponent's turn, it's very playable. An enjoyable game, as long as you don't think too much about how good it *could* have been.

—Dan Bennett



This free-agent vampire could really put the bite on the opposition, if you can afford to pony up his asking price.

PC GAMER

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Original concept; clean design.

LOWS: AI is really slow and none too bright; promised modem support is a no-show.

BOTTOM LINE: A faithful translation of a popular board game, but the PC version adds nothing new.

71%

Alien Virus

Category: Adventure game

Developer: Nova Spring

Publisher: Vic Tokai, 22940 Lockness Ave.,
Torrance, CA 90501
(310) 326-8880

Required

CD-ROM drive; 386;
4MB RAM; SVGA;
Mouse

We Recommend

Double-speed CD-
ROM; 486; 8MB
RAM; Supported
sound card

M.S.R.P.: \$59.95

For some strange reason, I really wanted to like *Alien Virus*. After admiring the simple design of the interface and gamescreens, I was under the impression that the designers had decided to avoid the bells and whistles that typify most adventure games, just so they'd have room to cram *Alien Virus* full of devious puzzles that would keep me playing for weeks and weeks, if not months. But unfortunately, that's just not the case.

And it's a shame too, because the story could have made for a pretty good romp. The plot bears a strong resemblance to those in the *Alien* films, as your character journeys to a lonely outpost deep in space on a routine cargo mission. Upon arrival, instead of finding the usual complement of station crew, the outpost seems strangely deserted. What little information you can get out of the station robot leads you to believe that something very deadly is inhabiting place, stalking the few remaining survivors — and that it'll soon begin stalking you.

The race to find survivors and avoid an unseen enemy should be enough to carry the adventure, but once you start investigating the station you'll find the



The main computer could provide helpful information — if the stupid thing worked right.

An eerie plot and sleek interface just aren't enough to make up for this game's other weaknesses.



Starting with the hanger bay of the space station, you'll encounter the first of many locked doors.



This store room just isn't very interesting (like much of the game), except for maybe a couple of locked doors.

game never really makes use of the eerie plot. Instead, *Alien Virus* presents you with some of the lamest puzzles I've seen. While I expected a few of the usual find-the-key-to-open-the-door puzzles, I didn't expect to spend nearly two-thirds of the game searching for ways to open doors.

To make matters worse, you never get the feeling you're making any headway, or gaining any useful information about the alien or surviving crewmates as you're exploring the station. You're just there, opening doors and picking up items.

Then there's the complete lack of atmosphere. The gamescreens are all static SVGA — reasonably attractive, but without animations to give a little visual break or even a reference point, these scenes quickly begin to look the same. This point becomes painfully obvious as you explore more of the station and find

yourself covering the same ground, wondering if you're ever going to find your way out again.

Thankfully, the mouse interface doesn't present any problems of its own. It's a simple point-and-click affair, allowing you to move from room to room and manage your inventory with ease.

In fact, the interface was probably the only thing that kept me playing as long as I did; no matter how many rooms I had to go through to use a new key or try an item, I always knew I could cover the distance in a short amount of time. But after a while, even that just didn't seem to matter.

If the puzzles had been more interesting, or more closely related to the story, I might have at least stuck with the game to its end. But ultimately, *Alien Virus* proved to be too much of a snooze to be worth it.

—Todd Vaughn

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Crisp high-res graphics; simple point-and-click interface.

59%

LOWS: Very slow, uneventful gameplay. You're a space-age locksmith, trying to open doors just to play the game.

BOTTOM LINE: The puzzles aren't very challenging, and there's little else to hold your interest.

Deploy. Destroy. Enjoy!

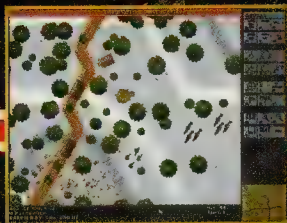
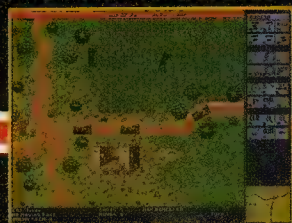
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SimTower

Category: Software toy

Developer: Yoot Saito

Publisher: Maxis, 2 Theater Square,
Orinda, CA 94563
(510) 254-9700

Required

CD-ROM drive; 386;
Windows 3.1 or
later; 4MB free
RAM; 5MB hard-
drive space; SVGA;
Mouse

We Recommend

486DX2\66MHz;
Windows-compati-
ble sound card

M.S.R.P.: \$59.95

SimTower, the latest in Maxis' successful sim series, is almost *SimCity* under a microscope. Instead of laying out and managing an entire city, you build a single skyscraper, working above and below ground to create your very own mini-city of shops, offices, condominiums, and so on. Your ultimate goal is to earn those prized star ratings (they're based primarily on the population count), and hopefully find yourself the owner of a five-star tower.

You'll run into the same kinds of

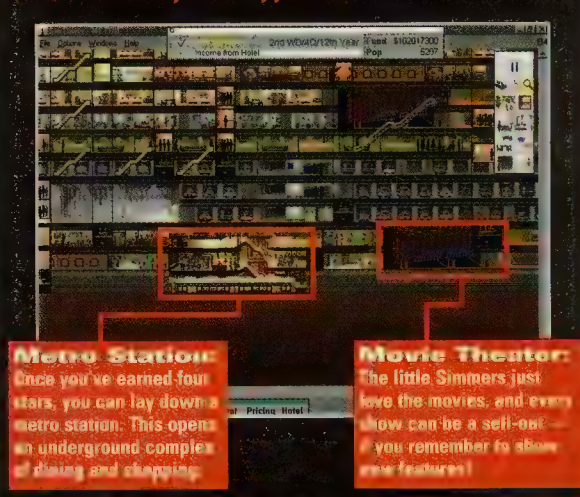
problems as in *Sim City*, but on an appropriately smaller scale; so where you once had to worry about traffic flow and mass-transit, *SimTower* puts the problem in terms of providing adequate elevator access to your tenants. And you'll have to be sure there's adequate parking so that, as your tower grows,

those thousands of workers will have someplace to keep their cars. The workers will get hungry, too, so you have to make space available to restaurateurs. And if you want to make sure all those condo dwellers have something to do on the weekends, you'll put in theaters and shopping centers.

Other problems peculiar to the skyscraper trade include keeping those noisy fast-food joints away from condos and offices; keeping noisy hotel rooms and suites away from condos and offices; and keeping noisy offices away from condos. No one ever complains about noisy condos.

SimTower is another addictive little sim from the folks at Maxis — but this time, it's a fairly easy habit to kick.

More than just offices

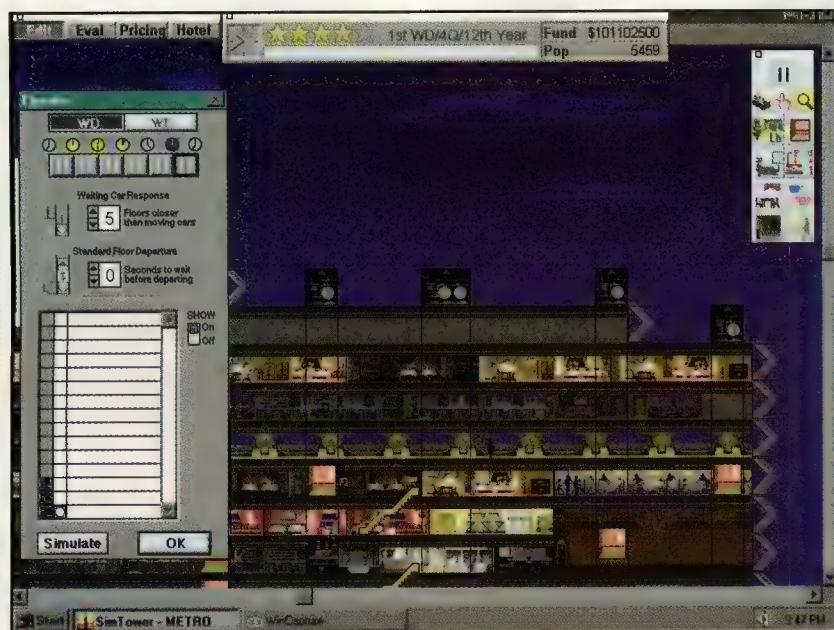


Straightening out the neighbor situation is really no big deal, though. You quickly learn to build your tower in harmonious rows, one floor devoted to condos, the next two to office space, etc.. And when you do occasionally have to place incompatible units next to one another, you just lower their rents; that makes *everybody* happy.

In fact, it's almost too easy to appease your tenants — which is odd, because keeping everyone happy is so important. If tenants grow too dissatisfied, they'll move out on you. And in the case of condos, which the tenants actually buy, this means you'll lose a big chunk of cash. But all you have to do is make sure to keep an eye on the overall satisfaction of the building, which you do by clicking the Eval button on your map window, and you can almost always quell unrest before it gets serious.

Probably the most difficult problem you'll face in achieving a high satisfaction rating is making sure the elevators are well-placed. And since each standard elevator shaft can extend no more than 30 floors, this means placing them at reasonable intervals across the width of your building, allowing enough space to begin new shafts to take over at the 30-floor limit. You have to make sure the new shafts overlap the old ones by a couple floors, too, or you risk congestion and even cutting off those higher floors to the people below.

Like the friendly neighbor thing,



By clicking the magnifying glass at the top or bottom of an elevator shaft, you can pull up this very important window of elevator info. Check it often to be sure your cars are moving efficiently.

A tour of the tower

Building and examining your tower is easy, thanks to *SimTower's* Windows interface. You can even name your little inhabitants!

Here are all those vital elevator shafts (black for passenger elevators, blue for express, and red for service). It's also a handy way to move your main view of the tower; just drag the rectangle to the section you want to see.

The Tool Bar: click here to pause the game, on the other icons to perform specific functions.

Demolish it, baby!

Lay lobby sections

Office space

Condominium

Parking garage, etc

Drag elevator shafts

Get info on specific areas

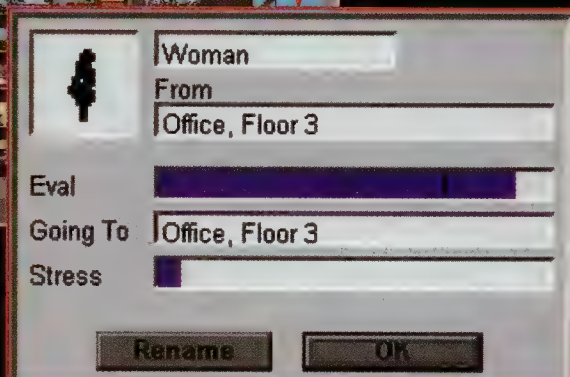
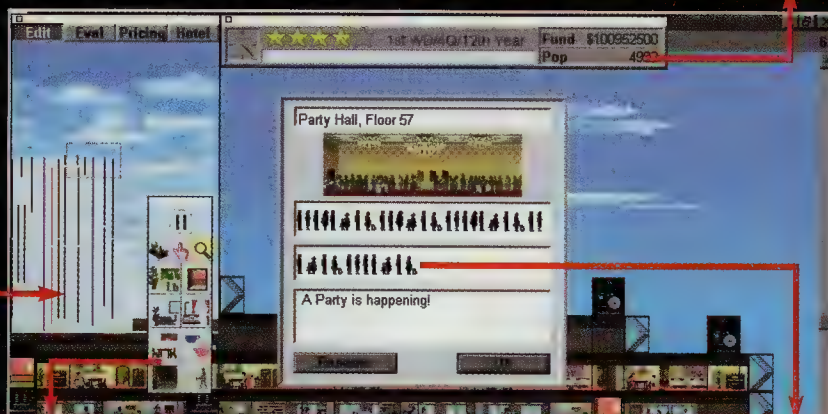
Place elevators and shafts

Single, double and suite hotel rooms

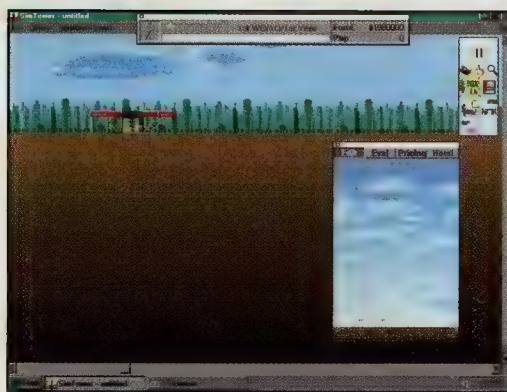
Restaurants and shopping center

Security and housekeeping

The status bar — fairly self-explanatory, but *quite* important! As the clock makes its circuit, your tower folk will rise, go to work, eat, sleep — and pay rent!



Clicking on a tower area brings up info on the space, and clicking on the people in that space lets you study and even rename them!



Your vertical empire begins humbly, with just a tiny little lobby; eventually you'll fill the screen with urban sprawl.

though, elevator problems are easily addressed. Express elevators, which only stop at lobbies (you place these every 15 floors), ease the problem, as do strategically placed escalators and stairways. And the most important key to the problem — smart elevator placement — is something you'll figure out after your first tower hits that 31st floor.

I'd have to say that the general lack of any real challenges to achieving a big, four- or five-star tower is the game's biggest drawback. But a close second is

the fact that, other than initially constructing the thing, there's just not enough to do. You'll spend most of your time just waiting, letting the revenues pile up so you can go on with your next construction phase. True, there are the occasional terrorist threats or visiting V.I.P.s, but even these diversions won't require any special attention if you've built your tower right in the first place.

Still, watching the tower's little occupants go about their business is a lot of fun. A lot of that's due to the game's nice, high-res graphics, which fill the screen with enough detail and variety to create the convincing

illusion that you really are watching a tiny tower full of people, almost a "people farm" of tiny skyscraper-dwellers sandwiched between panes of glass. Your wards will move from their condo homes to work in their little offices, and you can even "tag" individuals to track their specific movements throughout the day by clicking on individuals and naming them. This is a great way to find out what life is like in your tower, as you can watch a person do the 9 to 5 work thing, go grab dinner after work, maybe take

in a movie, and then disappear over the weekend for a much-needed break out in the country.

I'd say it's this quality of *SimTower* — the ability to get to know the game's wee inhabitants — that I ultimately enjoyed the most. It reminded me of that old Commodore 64 game *Little Computer People* — high praise indeed in my opinion. No, it's not the most challenging sim around. But *SimTower* is a great program to get started, then minimize and return to when you want to tweak settings, add floors, and check on those little city folk.

—Matt Firme

PC GAMER **FINAL VERDICT**

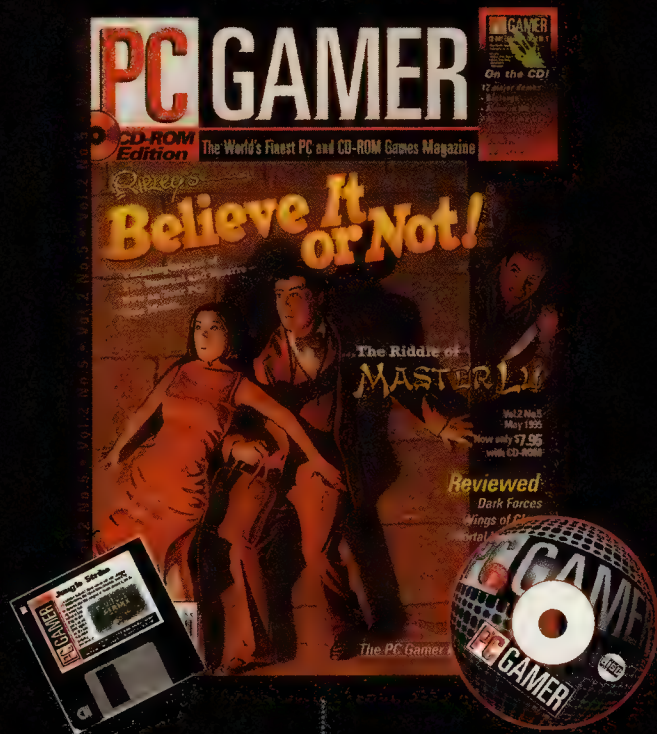
HIGHS: Good-looking SVGA graphics, and an interesting concept. Oh yeah, and little people to lord over.

LOWS: Not enough to do, and not enough real challenge.

BOTTOM LINE: At first, you'll play it a lot. Too soon, though, you'll figure out the strategy and find yourself just watching the thing.

74%

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5FW17

First Encounters

Category: Science Fiction Trading Sim

Developer: Frontier Developments Ltd.

Publisher: GameTek Inc., 2999 NE 191st St., Suite 500, Aventura, FL 33180 (305) 935-3995

Required

CD-ROM drive;
486/33; 5MB RAM;
6MB hard-drive
space; VGA; Mouse

We Recommend

Double-speed CD-ROM drive; 486/50; local-bus video card; Gravis or Sound Blaster-compatible sound card

M.S.R.P.: \$59.95

This is another one of those games that *should* have been great fun, but didn't quite make it.

There's certainly nothing wrong with the basic concept. After all, what could be more fun than living the life of a space trader, flitting from one star system to the next in your own starship, building your fortune and developing a galaxy-wide reputation as a dangerous man to cross?

Doing your taxes, maybe. For all its good intentions and nifty graphics, *First Encounters* suffers from a serious case of poor execution. It's obvious the designers had an excellent game in their heads; unfortunately, it lost something in the translation to the computer.

It's a tough call. This one has a lot going for it, but the frustration factor means only hard-core space-simmers need apply.

That's partly because *First Encounters* is the sequel to two other tragically flawed space-trading games, *Elite* and *Frontier*, and it still has a lot of the problems that often made those games tedious and frustrating.

At its heart, *First Encounters* is just another buy-low, sell-high game. You know the drill: you travel from port to port, looking for bargains on cargo you can unload somewhere else at a profit. That's where the tedium comes in. It's only slightly more interesting than watching paint dry, so *First Encounters* livens things up in the usual way, with some combat.

And that's where the frustration comes in. From your very first interstellar jump, you'll encounter enemies that have you severely outgunned. While you're still struggling along in a ship with no shields and a pathetic one-megawatt pulse laser, you'll be forced on almost every trip to fight enemies with 20-megawatt continuous-beam lasers and homing missiles that will kill you with a single hit. And since there's apparently no way to avoid combat, you're going to end up being blasted out



You plot your course on the star map. There are hundreds of star systems, but with no way to search for a specific star, some passenger and courier missions can be next to impossible.



Your past has a way of following you around in *First Encounters*. The Profile screen keeps track of your reputation and criminal record.

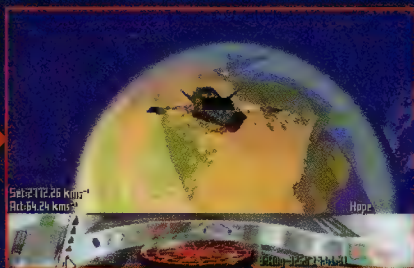
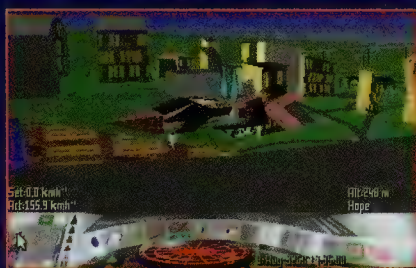
of the sky with alarming frequency.

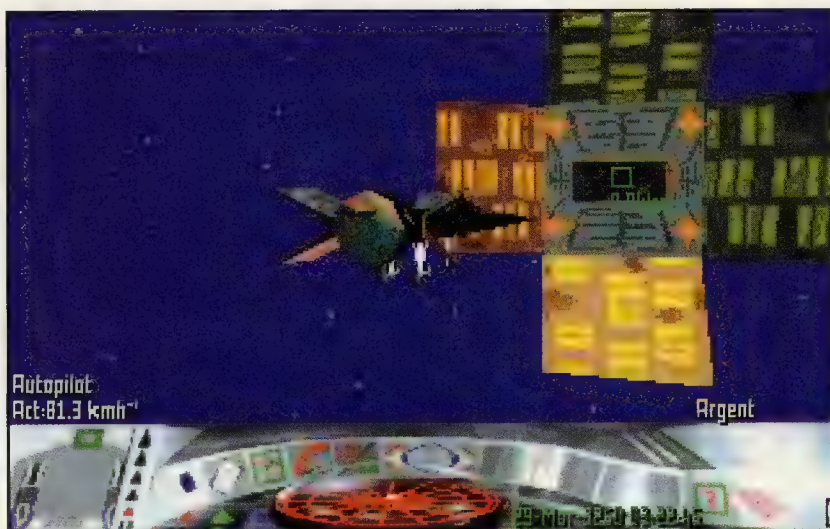
That makes it incredibly hard to get anywhere in *First Encounters*. In order to do any of the more interesting things in the game, like hauling passengers or becoming a pirate or bounty hunter, you'll need a much better ship with lots of extras. To get it, you'll need a ton of money — and that means hours of monotonous trade runs.

Which brings us to another problem. Buying and selling is made unnecessarily tough by a lack of information; you can't find out the going price for a

Up, Up and Away

In *First Encounters*, the transition from liftoff to interstellar travel is seamless; instead of watching a cut-scene that gets you from the planet's surface to deep space, you can watch the spaceport, then the city, then the entire planet become a dot in your rear view. It creates a real sense that you're traveling huge distances.





The 3D, texture-mapped graphics are a big improvement over those in *Elite* and *Frontier*.

given item in a given star system until you're actually docked at a planet or space station in that system. That lack of information is understandable in historical trading games like *High Seas Trader* and *New Horizons*, where the technology of the day made information hard to come by. But in 1995, I can pick up my phone in California and find out the price of tea in China, so I find it hard to believe that I'd have no way of finding out the cost of robots in the next star system in an era when faster-than-light travel is as routine as a quick drive to the grocery store. It's an obstacle that adds nothing to gameplay, since simply staying alive is challenging enough.

Given all the frustration and repetition, it'd be easy to give *First Encounters* a negative review; it has a lot of problems. But for some reason, I keep coming back to it.

The fact is, ever since I first saw Han Solo in the "Star Wars" movies, I've loved the idea of an open-ended game that lets players conduct their own galaxy-spanning careers, deciding for themselves how large their operations should get and whether or not they should live as pirates, bounty hunters, or honest traders. And *First Encounters*



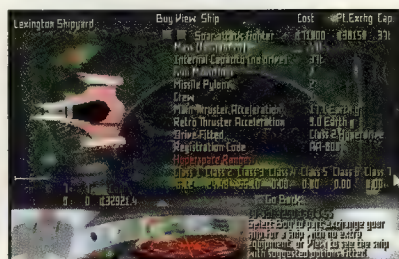
The Economy screen gives you an overview of a star system's major and minor imports and exports. It can help you decide what products are likely to bring a profit when you visit.

comes closer to being that game than any other I've seen.

There's a lot of depth here. As hard and time-consuming as it is to make money in *First Encounters*, it opens up a world of options. Amassing a surplus of cash lets you buy new starships and select from a wide array of add-ons. Do you save your money for the Cobra Mk. III you've had your eye on, or does it make more sense to simply buy improvements for your current starship, at the expense of precious cargo space? Will you jump into the risky but profitable world of drug-smuggling, or will you decide you can't afford trouble with the local authorities? You can do whatever you want, but if you get caught breaking the law, you'll have a criminal record that stays with you wherever you go.

It's that depth that makes *First Encounters* so believable — and so hard to stop playing. For all its problems, it fills a niche that no other program can touch today. The bottom line is this: if you've got a low tolerance for frustration, don't even think of playing this game. But if you can put up with some hair-pulling and desk-pounding in exchange for a unique experience, give *First Encounters* a shot.

—Dan Bennett



You can afford this Spar fighter, but you won't have enough money left over to outfit it properly — and it's not much better than the Saker you're already flying.

Becoming Elite

In the world of *First Encounters*, it's hard enough to survive the hop between star systems, much less turn a profit and earn the coveted Elite ranking. Here are a few tips that should keep you and your business thriving long enough to do that.

Find a good trade route.

Before things get interesting, you'll need to make a ton of money. There's no need to set up a complex trade route with three or four planets; just pick two star systems with different industries (like a farming system and an industrial system) and determine which products bring the best prices. For instance, running robots from Titican to Gateway and animal skins from Gateway back to Titican is a good, short hop that will yield a respectable profit.

Don't mess with low-priced items.

In general, the more expensive a product is, the bigger the profit you'll make when you sell it. So go for the big-ticket commodities, especially at the start of the game when you have so little cargo space.

Don't buy a new ship just because you can.

Chances are, the first starship you can afford won't be significantly better than the Saker fighter you start with. When you finally lay out the cash for a new ride, make sure it has considerably more cargo space than your current vessel. And, don't buy any new ship until you're sure you'll have enough cash left over to deck it out with all the essentials, like an automatic pilot, missiles and a decent gun.

Don't waste your money on the Combat Computer.

It actually makes fighting harder, not easier. When it comes time to improve your ship's chances in battle, go for the items that will do you the most good: Navy Grade Missiles, Beam Weapons, Shield Generators, the Radar Mapper, and the Naval ECM package.

Save your game frequently.

Even when you've worked your way up to a really nice starship with top-notch weapons and defenses, you'll occasionally encounter attackers that can blow you away in a matter of seconds, so it's good to have a recent save to fall back on.

PC GAMER

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS:

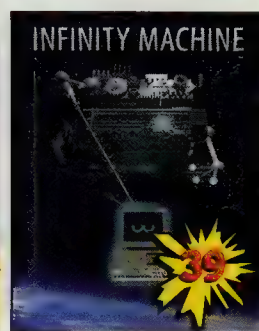
Impressive depth and variety; nice texture-mapped graphics.

70%

LOWS: Can be painfully repetitive, and combat is frustratingly tough.

BOTTOM LINE: *First Encounters* is an ambitious game — but it has a lot of problems that drag it down.

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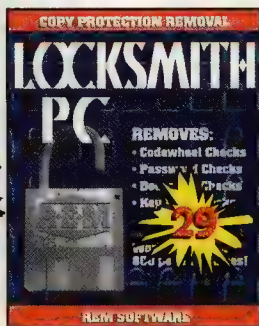
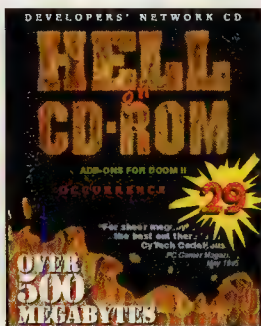
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Power: The Game

Category: Strategy

Developer: Power Games International

Publisher: Power Games International,
280 West 4800 South, Murray,
UT 84107 (800) 671-6333

Required

CD-ROM Drive;
386SX; Windows
3.1; 4MB RAM;
10MB hard-drive
space; Mouse

We Recommend

486SX; Windows-
supported sound
card; 6MB RAM

M.S.R.P.: \$49.95 (\$69.95 with board game)

Sid Sackson, the legendary dean of board gaming, has declared *Power* "one of the best strategy games of the decade;" high praise from a man who sees and plays them all. But though this quote is displayed prominently on the box for the computer port of *Power*, I'd say it's a touch misleading. That quote was based on the quite successful board version, not the computer version.

And at first glance, nothing about *Power* the computer game seems to justify the quote. I've seen shareware with better graphics and sound, and the design appears to be of the *Risk*, *Axis* and *Allied*, *Capture the Flag* school. It's commendable, but hardly groundbreaking. Yet when you mess around under the hood for a bit, you realize there's something substantial here.

Power is a boardgame for

It may not be the sexiest or most in-depth game around, but *Power* has a solid design and strong modem play that make it worth a look.

Windows, and like any such game, is hampered by its cardboard origins. There's a reason there aren't any board game equivalents of *Doom* or *TIE Fighter*, and there's also a reason *Monopoly* and other box games have received a tepid reception in their computer incarnations. They are visually flat and lifeless, and lack the main ingredient that makes board games fun — human interaction. *Power* suffers from the first problem, but has turned to the modem to solve the second.

Power's theme is simple; crush your opponent by carefully maneuvering game pieces. Four players compete at once (never more or less) on a small, map-like board representing an abstract terrain. The board is divided into four equal quadrants, with four islands in the center of the board and four corners where play begins. Each player (white, yellow, red, and blue) starts with a selection of units: two planes, two infantry, two tanks, and two ships. Each also has a flag, and this flag is the goal of the game. Once a person's flag is captured, he's out of the game. The winner is the person who captures all the flags.

Units maneuver into position across the four islands by simply clicking a piece and a destination. If two enemy pieces occupy a single space at the end of a move, they fight, with a simple mathematical calculation deciding the victory (i.e., tanks worth two points beat an infantry unit worth one, and so on). The winning side then adds the defeated piece to his forces, and play continues. By occupying enemy ground, you accrue power points, which can be traded in for new pieces, right up to a

"megamissile" nuke. Simplicity incarnate.

While understanding the game is as simple as checkers, there's a fairly high degree of strategy to consider when positioning your units for attacks and counter-moves, which gives *Power* a chess-like feel. And while the AI works pretty well at directing the opposing forces, it's ultimately a lifeless opponent. And during player vs. computer



Power is played on a plain, static board: not too pretty, is it?

matches, *Power* is usually a lifeless game. What really makes it shine is the fact that it can be played over modem, network, or even the internet (with a standard SLIP connection). The sparse but effective graphics mean screen redraw times are reasonable, and with the net growing as a gaming environment, *Power* is sure to find a place on it as a straightforward, enjoyable game. It's no *Empire*, but it has its own merits. And you won't spill beer on the board.

—T. Liam McDonald



Several settings mean *Power* has some slight play variability.

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGH: Good strategy game with simple rules; a potential for complex strategy.

LOW: No "chrome" on this one, just bare-bones graphics and sound.

BOTTOM LINE: As a player-vs-computer strategy game it's OK, but the real strength is in modem, network, and internet play.

75%

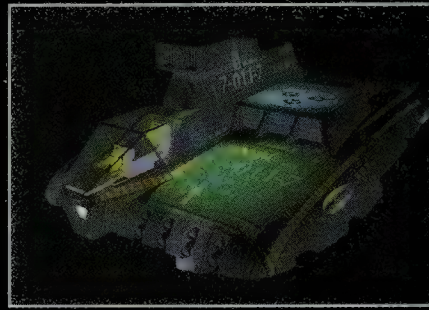
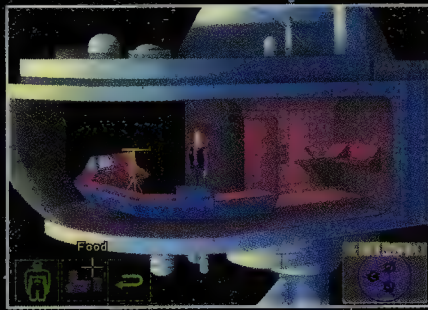
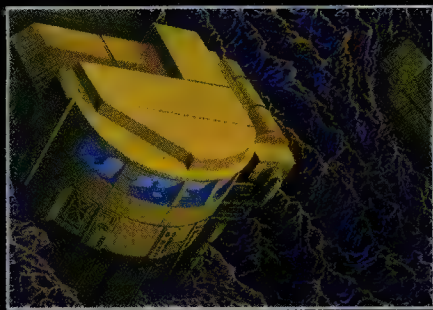
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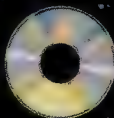
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Product Information Number 98

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ECO: East Africa

Category: Simulation

Developer: Viridis

Publisher: IVI Publishing, 7500 Flying Cloud Dr., Minneapolis, MN 55344 (800) 432-1332

Required

Double-speed CD-ROM drive; 486/25; 4MB RAM

We Recommend

Quad-speed CD-ROM; 486DX50; 8MB RAM; Supported sound card; Mouse

M.S.R.P.: \$45

The environment is a hot topic these days, and IVI capitalizes on that interest by putting you in the middle of Ethemba — a fictional African wildlife preserve — in their environmental sim *ECO: East Africa*. You're the new game warden, charged with the nearly impossible mission of getting the preserve back into shape. And the situation doesn't look good: The last game warden was killed by poachers, animal population is low, and the government will fire you if you don't get the job done in a hurry.

It ain't easy rebuilding the park, and as you start the game you don't have much in the way of staff, money, or even a place to work. So the first thing you better do is get busy building your headquarters and getting organized.

You'll begin by using a handy journal which allows you to view a map of the park, info on budget, staff, water, etc., and gives you access to enter the park itself. From this journal you'll build your headquarters and begin organizing the park — by ordering supplies and checking your mail. And in this dark, lonely jungle the mail proves to be very important; staff is hired through the mail, and you'll also get contributions and requests from tourism, hunting, and environmental groups.

The interface quickly begins showing its weaknesses, though, and makes even the simple task of answering the mail a tedious chore. First you have to

You'll have to deal with hungry lions, pesky poachers, bad weather, and dwindling funds as the game warden of an African wildlife preserve.

click on an envelope to read a letter, then click on a notebook full of responses and choose which one you want to send. Then you have to select an address in your Rolodex to place it onto your response letter, then place the letter in your out box.

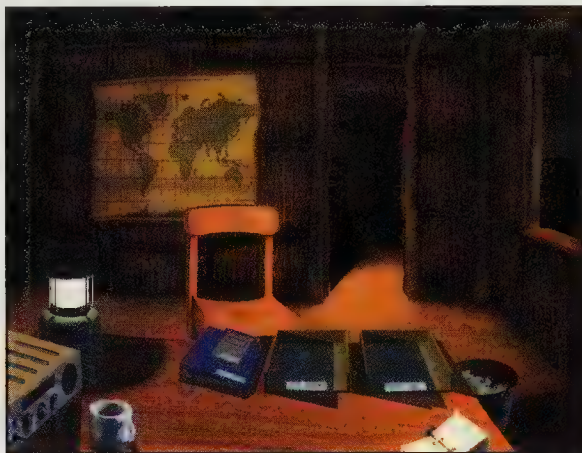
The interface doesn't fare much better once you're out in the park. After accessing the park mode from your journal, you'll find you don't actually get to move around the preserve. Instead, you use a compass to choose one of four directions to face. And you just stand there, looking. While the park views themselves are gorgeous — with animals, trees, grass, and mountains all rendered in vivid detail — the load times for these screens are terribly slow, and you really miss the feeling that you're actually walking through the preserve, or witnessing any of the changes you've made.

And once you get the hang of managing your park, the day-to-day operations become terribly monotonous; sorting through mail, looking for poachers, and feeding your staff fill most of your time, with very few diversions. On a really exciting day, you might see a little curl of smoke on the horizon, indicating the presence of a poachers' camp. But even here the excitement is limited. While you can attempt to drive off the poachers by burning their tents, the journal mode is the only way you can "directly" attack them, and even then you won't see what

you've done; you just sit watching the park map, waiting to see if the ranger or poacher icon turns red to indicate that they've been injured. Now that's exciting!

After a while you really don't give a damn about poachers, villagers, animals, or money, and will probably find yourself looking forward to trouble, just to get a break from the monotony. Getting eaten by lions is always good for a laugh.

ECO: East Africa has all the ele-



You'll spend a lot of time here in your office, but wouldn't you rather be out exploring the countryside? Sorry, not in this game...



Staff bios are available on the staff page in the journal. The more experience and education the person has, the better.

ments needed for a great game: a fresh concept, beautiful graphics, a struggle of good verses evil. But without the challenging interaction that a sim like this requires, the most important thing — fun — is lost in the shuffle.

—Lisa M. Howie

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Beautiful graphics, timely subject matter, good concept.

LOWS: Monotonous game play, not enough action to keep your interest.

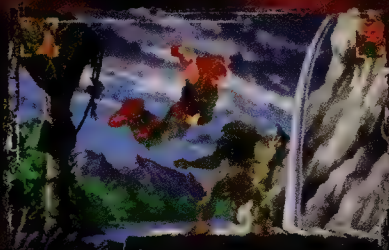
BOTTOM LINE: Only those who are interested in East Africa — and have a great deal of patience — need apply.

63%



Here's a rare glimpse of a poachers' camp; just click on the fire to torch the place.

"SO MANY WAYS TO KILL OR DIE...WHO CAN CHOOSE?"



KNIFED, CLAWED & BEAT UP

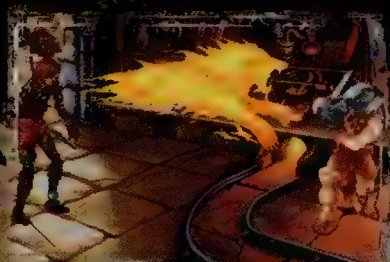
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Interacts w/background	No	Yes
Replay mode	No	Yes
3D Bio Motion	No	Yes

**3D
BIO
MOTION**



SAVAGE WARRIORS™

The Perfect General II



Category: Wargame

Developer: QQP

Publisher: Quantum Quality Productions,
495 Highway 202, Flemington,
NJ 08822 (908) 788-2799

Required

CD-ROM drive;
386/33; 4MB RAM;
SVGA; Mouse

We Recommend

Double-speed CD-ROM drive; 486;
8MB RAM;
Supported sound card

M.S.R.P.: \$49.95

When you first boot up *The Perfect General II*, you'll see a brief video clip of someone from QQP dressed up as a staff officer, wagging a swaggerstick and dispensing tactical tips. The accents are a hoot, the costumes look to have been looted from attics and thrift-shops, and the acting is straight from a Monty Python skit.

It's a corny, cheesy way to start the proceedings (the tactical tips are good, though!), but somehow it captures the exuberance and *élan* that typifies QQP's whole approach to wargaming: you're *having fun*, and that's what it's all about.



Cheesy as they are, these opening video clips do contain sound tactical advice.

When the original *Perfect General* came out a couple years ago, it seemed to come from nowhere, from a company few gamers had ever heard about, with none of the tentativeness that often characterizes the initial offerings of new companies.

And it was, hands-down, the best computer translation of tabletop wargaming anybody had ever published. It captured the essence of the experience: the simple, hands-on pleasure of moving your tanks and guns individu-

Here's the perfect wargame for those grown-up kids who pine for the days of playing with toy soldiers in a sandbox.

ally, and figuring out where and how to use them to the best advantage.

Along with that experience, it seamlessly combined the computer's ability to calculate, impartially and objectively, lines of

sight, terrain effects, cumulative damage, rates of movement—all the little chores that go with miniatures games—and added the elements that had previously been left to the gamer's imagination: vivid sound effects, artillery barrages that tear up the landscape and leave smoking craters, exploding vehicles, and fully realized landscapes.

And though it's been a long time in coming, QQP pulled out all the stops in designing *The Perfect General II*, and it shows. The original experience has been expanded, enriched, deepened, and made even more compelling.

Take the new SVGA graphics: crisply detailed hills, towns, roads, bridges, rivers, deserts that are lovely to behold. The effects of terrain on movement and combat have been enhanced, and as you play, you'll discover more and more ways to use the environment. If a certain deployment seems sensible, it usually works that way in the game: putting artillery on the reverse slopes of hills, hiding tanks in the woods, ringing a besieged city with mines and bunkers, using rail lines to shift heavy units—such tactics give you advantage, and if you don't use them to the fullest, you can be sure the hard-charging computer opponent will.

Clearly, the best way to enjoy *TPGII* is to fight against another human opponent, but QQP has invested much thought and labor in making the computerized enemy a foe to be reckoned with. You can set the AI on five different levels of sophistication, and on 4 or 5, it's tough to beat.



In each scenario, you purchase units with a number of "buy points." Usually, it's best to start off with a lot of cheap, fast, armored cars, so you can claim possession of as many objectives as possible during your first turns.

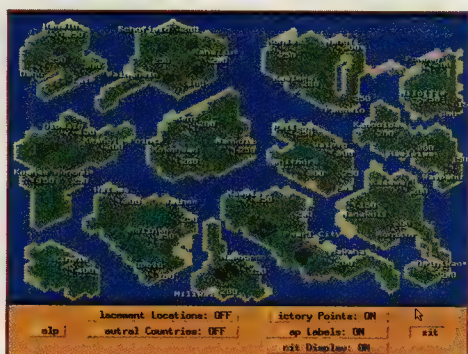
Even on level 3, it gives you a real scrap.

New unit types have been added: air support, offshore bombardment, anti-aircraft fire, and even great, lumbering "elephant tanks" that really amount to land battleships. It takes patience and luck to deploy these slow-moving behemoths, but they pack devastating firepower and they can shrug off artillery barrages as if they were hailstorms.

The new scoring system adds considerable depth. It's not enough, in most



Craters, burning towns, blown-up bridges, and spiffy explosions all add visual spice to the beautifully rendered maps.



Island battles are interesting; since no amphibious movement is allowed, they often turn into intense artillery duels.

About those Airfields...

Since airstrikes have a two-in-three chance of destroying their targets, air support can be a crucial ingredient to victory. Obviously, one of the first objectives you want to seize with your fast-moving units is the airfield closest to your initial starting zone.

Possession of airfields is given to the side which last touched them with any of its units (you don't need to actually park a tank nearby in order to retain possession, although that's a wise thing to do if the enemy is within one-turn's striking distance).

Several times, I quickly established control over an airfield and then waited expectantly for the computer to grant me my airplanes during the next reinforcement phase...and I waited and waited and waited...and still never got any planes.



Airfields are vital objectives in many scenarios. If you can't capture the enemy's, at least try to neutralize them with long-range fire.

Although this is *not* explained anywhere in the manual, you can only obtain planes on airfields that lie within your initial zone of deployment. If a given field is not within those boundaries, the only advantage you get from taking it is denying it to the enemy. In some scenarios, this rule seemed to give the computer an unfair advantage — and the only remedy is to seize any functioning enemy fields as quickly as possible. Of course, in some scenarios, the advantage goes to you.

Aircraft parked on the tarmac are *very* vulnerable to ground assault; a single, puny armored car can destroy them all in one move. Watch out for sneak attacks, and remember that artillery can neutralize enemy airfields from a distance.

Heavy armor carries integral anti-aircraft protection (the chance of shooting down an enemy plane is one-in-three), but you should, if possible, station machine gun units near your artillery batteries, to give them some protection from air assault.

of the scenarios, just to blow up a lot of enemy units; you must seize and hold objectives (usually towns or vital road junctions) in order to win. So skillful maneuvering of all your troops becomes, quite rightfully, the primary element of success. Relatively weak units — infantry squads and light armor — can win the battle for you, if you can get them to their objectives safely.

Scenarios are grouped in categories. Some offer compact engagements suitable for playing during your lunch hour, while others include battles of enormous complexity and scope. There are full-blown campaigns, too, featuring linked scenarios. Some battles take place on and around clustered islands, some are fought on deserts, and still others in dense forests. But all the maps have been carefully designed to include lots of tactically important features, such as narrow passes, strategic crossroads, commanding elevations, critical bridges.

In all, there are 98 unique scenarios, each with its own challenges and quirks. On the basis of the 50-plus hours I've spent sampling the various set-ups, I can testify that the ingredients of victory are significantly different from one scenario to the next. You have to *think*, and you have to study the maps (which are handsomely reproduced in two accompanying volumes). Such variety and depth of challenge assure hundreds of hours of replay value, especially if you play as the defender one time and the aggressor the next.

I found the campaigns to be less appealing than the individual scenarios, though, because the rules governing them seemed too arbitrary. When playing as the Japanese defender (in a *huge* campaign called "Eclipse of the Rising Sun"), I managed to annihilate the Americans on Guadalcanal, only to have the computer inform me that, since "the attacker has failed in his objectives, the campaign mode is now terminated."

Now wait a minute! Shouldn't a successful defense earn carry-over points for the next chapter in the campaign?



Use the Recon Map to keep track of placement zones, units, objectives, and victory points.



Massed field artillery can be devastating, but it doesn't move anywhere unless you divert vehicles to tow the guns — which makes it very vulnerable to counter-battery fire.

Shouldn't I be able to take some of those victorious units from Guadalcanal and deploy them on New Guinea or Guam or Tinian? What gives?

And, while I know the folks at QQP are as tired of reading this as I am of writing it, they simply must do something about their manuals. This one is wretchedly organized, clumsily written, incomplete, and riddled with atrocious English. The violent overthrow of a government is a *coup d'état*, fellas, not a "Coup d'Tat."

These complaints pale when compared to the game's impressive achievements, though. It's not a spelling bee, after all, but a wargame. And one hell of a fine wargame at that.

—William R. Trotter



Engineers are the most expensive foot soldiers, but are extremely valuable for repairing roads, bridging rivers, and clearing pesky minefields.

PC GAMER

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: A beautiful, addictive, smooth-playing game, with terrific replay value.

LOWS: The manual is a disgrace and fails to explain adequately a number of elements.

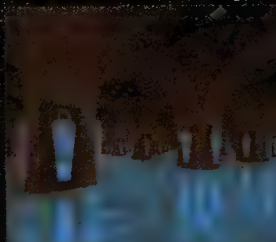
BOTTOM LINE: A sequel worth waiting for! It will make you long for those days of playing with toy soldiers in the sandbox. A masterpiece.

91%

NO DOGS.

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DOOM - ID SOFTWARE



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H.U.R.L.

Category: Action

Developer: Millennium Media Group

Publisher: Millennium Media Group,
234 N. Columbus Blvd.,
Philadelphia, PA (215) 625-8928

Required

CD-ROM drive;
486/25; 4MB RAM;
500K free base
memory

We Recommend

Double-speed CD-
ROM; 486DX33;
8MB RAM;
Supported sound
card; Gamepad or
joystick

M.S.R.P.: \$39.95

.....

This is supposed to be a first-person shooter for kids, set in a *Doom*-style environment without all the blood and gore. Or the character. Or fun. Instead of riding the world of demonic beasts, in *H.U.R.L.* you play as a Special Undercover Dirt Zapper trying to clean up a world that's been trashed by Bob the Slob and his messy minions. But before you can defeat Bob,

you'll have to face down his sloppy helpers, who toss eggs, throw up on you, and blow smoke rings in your face. If you get hit by these attacks, you get dirty; if you get too dirty, you lose the game and have to start all over.

You'll fend off your attackers with such non-violent weaponry as water balloons, bars of soap, and deodorant sticks. To get these weapons, you need to earn money by collecting trash and cleaning up each level. Then you spend your cash at a vending machine, buying your choice of prime janitorial and personal hygiene equipment.

The idea sounds great, but the game just doesn't deliver. The graphics look nice from a distance, but up close they become incredibly pixelicious. And the levels use the same predictable graphics, with only a few minor varia-



Swamp Breath blew smoke rings at you, but you have reduced him to a slobbering fool.

tions. To top it off, there just isn't any real challenge to the game, and when you finally face Bob on the last level, he's no harder to beat than any of the other baddies. And unfortunately, you won't be able to choose a more challenging difficulty level.

I found the game more frustrating than fun. And if I were still a kid, I would no doubt seek excitement elsewhere.

—Dean H. Renninger



You can make pigs fly by cleaning them up with some soap, water balloons, or deodorant sticks.

PC GAMER

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: The idea is there for a great, non-violent kids game with *Doom*-like qualities.

LOWS: There isn't much challenge, satisfaction, or fun here.

BOTTOM LINE: It fills a void in the kids market, just not very well.

53%

Hey,
check out the free
INN software on the
CD-ROM in this mag!



SuperKarts

Category: Arcade racing game

Developer: Manic Media Productions

Publisher: Williams Entertainment;
Distributed by: GT Interactive,
16 East 40th St., New York,
NY 10016 (212) 686-9432

Required

CD-ROM; 386DX/20;
4MB RAM; VGA

We Recommend

Double-speed CD-
ROM; Supported
soundcards;
Joystick or
gamepad

M.S.R.P.: \$59.95

Don't even try to compare *SuperKarts* to those kiddie-cart games where you're racing against magic mushrooms, giant frogs, and smiling wallabies. This is realistic driving action, set in the competitive world of international go-kart racing. And it's surprisingly good fun.

It may not look as exciting as being

in the cockpit of a 600HP NASCAR racer, but after trying to keeping these little carts on the track for a few laps of jumps and grinds, you'll see that in some ways, these buggies can be as challenging as taking laps in any stock car. And the best part is, there's no shifting, weight jacking, or any of the hassle that can sometimes make sims a pain.

The tracks play a big part in keeping *SuperKarts* a constant challenge, with plenty of extremely tight hairpin turns, walls that seem to magnetically attract your cart, and everyday hazards like snow, ice, and water.

Thankfully, it doesn't take long to get a feel for maneuvering your cart around these obstacles.

Whether you use the keyboard, joystick, or gamepad, you can really slap your cart through the turns; driving with the Thrustmaster T1 driving wheel is especially satisfying.

The best part of *SuperKarts* is its balance of realism and playability. It never turns into simple, mindless action; it's tough, but not too tough — and when you've beaten the pack of computer opponents, you can always go head-to-head with friends thanks to the game's network and modem options.



With a variety of tracks located around the world, you'll see some pretty strange sights lining the track, like these golden Buddhas from in India.

It ain't fancy, but with its smooth control, consistent challenge, and fast action, *SuperKarts* is just the thing to fill the gap between arcade-style excitement and the full-bore driving sims.

—Todd Vaughn

PC GAMER **FINAL VERDICT**

HIGHS: Lots of tracks with clever hazards; good modem and network options.

83%

LOWS: On tough settings, you'll have a hard time keeping your cart on track; single-player mode gets repetitive.

BOTTOM LINE: If you're frustrated by the demands *NASCAR*, *SuperKarts* is a sure-fire way to driving excitement.



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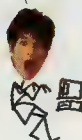
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that new
quarter-
back?



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BLOODWINGS

PUMPKINHEAD'S REVENGE



Woodruff and the Schnibble

Category: Graphic Adventure

Developer: Coktel Vision

Publisher: Sierra On-Line,
Bellevue, WA 98007
(209) 683-4468

Required

CD-ROM drive;
486/25; 4MB RAM;
5MB hard-drive
space; Windows 3.1
or later; SVGA;
Windows-supported
sound card; Mouse

We Recommend

Double-speed CD-
ROM drive; Pentium

M.S.R.P.: \$52

The folks who brought us Goblins are back with a hit — and a strange dude named Schnibble.



underclass, wisemen with amnesia, and interesting, almost Dr. Seuss-like characters and settings throughout. You'll learn that your father was an agitator, a human trying to restore hope and equality to the enslaved Boozooks by advancing the worship of the mythical Schnibble. To free him and continue his noble work, you'll have to take on the Big Wig and his evil bureaucracy.

This all may sound a bit dramatic, but *Woodruff and the Schnibble* manages to present its storyline without ever becoming heavy or self-indulgent; it's hard to get too serious when faced with puzzles like sticking a plastic finger in a big nose to open a secret doorway.

The puzzles — really, the meat of any graphic adventure — are almost uniformly bizarre. But the designers and writers have done such a good job of crafting the game world that even odd puzzles like the nose-door make perfect sense in their context. In fact, the puzzles are almost always fair and logical, once you understand the world in which they're set. That's not to say they're all easy, because they're not; you'll find yourself frustrated at times, but when you do eventually find your solution, you won't feel cheated.

There are a few minor annoyances to *Woodruff*, though — none of them serious, but certainly worth mentioning. Probably the biggest pain is the fact that all the dialog is spoken, with no text to back up the actors' performances. And while that's just fine most of the time, there are a few characters that are just too tough to understand. Then there's the fact that once started, there's no way to just end dialogs; even if you've already heard a character's spiel, you're just gonna have to sit through it again.

My only other complaint involves moving from location to location. There are plenty of different spaces to explore in this game, and it can get pretty tedious waiting as Woodruff shuffles from one to the next. As with the dialogs, there's no way to speed through these little animations. I think the designers realized this, though, because about half way



The artwork in this intro sequence, depicting baby Woodruff and his dad in happier times, is great. But best of all, the art in the game itself is just as impressive.

f you've played any of the Goblins games from Coktel Vision, it'll come as no surprise that this latest Coktel offering makes for some good gaming. Coktel has a real flair for creating zany worlds, loveably bizarre characters, and excellent puzzle content — and most importantly, for combing these parts to create some of the most cohesive and believable graphic adventures out there.

This time out, there's more emphasis on storyline than in past Coktel titles. In *The Adventures of Woodruff and the Schnibble*, you play as Woodruff, the son of a scientist who's been kidnapped by the evil Big Wig just before the game begins. You don't remember what happened, or even who you are, as play starts. You'll have to put a lot of pieces together to get a sense of just who this Woodruff guy is, and even more to fully understand the complex, cartoony world he lives in.

But learning about the world is never dull. It's many-layered and full of detail — good versus evil, an oppressed

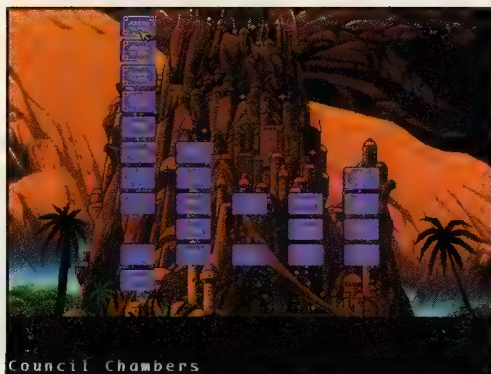


This thing, the Tobozon, is like a little video-phone — and you'll use it very often. The young lady is Coh Cott, and Woodruff would like to be her friend...

through the game you're given a device that lets you transport from one area to another. And man, will you appreciate it.

None of these little details obscures the originality, fun, or fairness of *Woodruff and the Schnibble*, though. This is great gaming, and recommended to all.

—Matt Firme



About half way through, you'll be given the transport-ozon. With it, you'll be able to zip around to different locations a whole lot faster than by foot.

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Looks great, fun and detailed storyline, solid, logical challenges.

LOWS: Some characters are tough to understand, the inability to skip through dialogs and some animations gets tiresome.

BOTTOM LINE: A great graphic adventure, and further reason to praise Coktel Vision.

90%

A Few New Aces

Aces of the Deep took its share of awards last year, and earned a fairly loyal following of both sim fans and submarine enthusiasts. Though it's about to be challenged by SSI's *Silent Hunter*, it will undoubtedly remain a leading U-boat game for many people.

So it comes as good news indeed that Dynamix has just given users a chance for a little bit more action with their new *Aces of the Deep* expansion disk, incorporating one new sub, new technology, and a whole new theater of action. The result is a well-balanced enhancement disk that actually gives gamers something truly new.

The big deal here is the Type XXI submarine, now available to career commanders in 1943 and in a number of single missions. The Type XXI was designed to meet a pressing need for faster boats with better underwater performance capabilities. In reality, the boats didn't enter service until just shortly before the end of the war, so turning these monsters loose in '43 could change the progress of career games drastically.

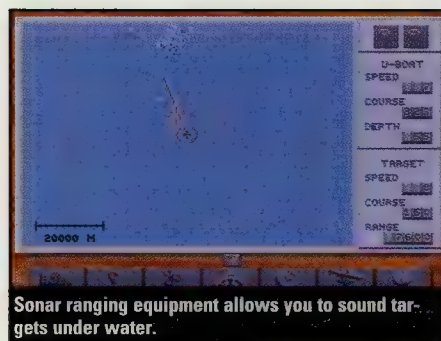
Because it was just

packed with batteries, the sub's underwater operating time and speed were greatly increased. And thanks to new torpedo tubes, the XXI could fire at depths up to 100 feet, and mechanized torpedo loading shaved precious time off reloading. Probably the greatest innovations were in the electronic sensor suite, which included an active sonar, radar, and enhanced underwater listening capabilities.

As sub commander, you can now use sonar while submerged, or radar while on the surface. There are also two new torpedoes to deploy. These include a G7e ("LUT") Pattern Runner, which allows for a second run-leg and angle

ing ballast and the water level inside the boat.

One new hunting ground comes with this disk: The Mediterranean. There are six new historic missions set there, but captains will not be ordered there in the course of a game. As an environment for Wolfpacks, the Mediterranean was a wash, with low tonnage and only a modest effect on the course of the war. Still, slipping past Gibraltar to prowling new waters makes for



Sonar ranging equipment allows you to sound targets under water.

T. Liam McDonald



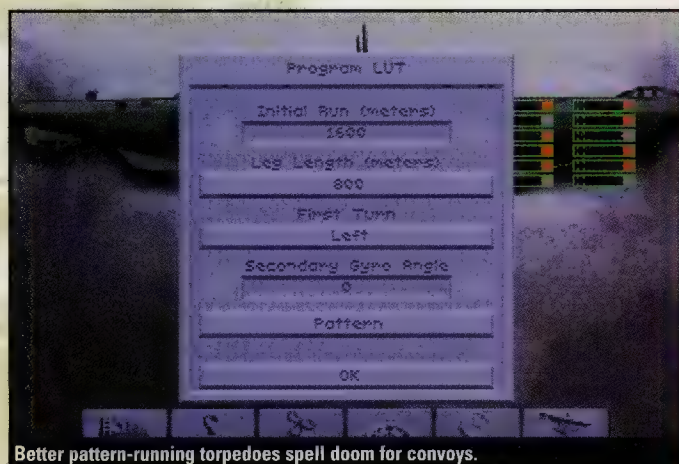
in pattern setting, greatly increasing the chance of a hit; and the G7es ("Gnat II"), an acoustic homing torp with a wider acoustic range. A pair of new gauges have been added to check buoyancy, detailing the air left available for blow-

Venture back to the days of yesteryear, as our resident replay-value ranger looks at some add-ons that bring new life and greater gameplay to some classic historical sims and wargames. Hi-yo, Tommy, away!!!!

Wargaming With Novastar

David Landry over at Novastar continues to flood my mailbox with quantities of top-flight scenarios for SSI's *Tanks!* In case you're tuning in late, *Tanks! Wargame Construction Set II* was a nifty wargame with a rock-solid core design that allowed gamers to create their own scenarios, with any number of units from the age of armor onward. Novastar is supporting *Tanks!* aficionados with some well-done and heavily documented disks from a stable of knowledgeable and enthusiastic designers. They are also now turning out disks for the ancient-but-still-fondly-thought-of *Battles of Napoleon*.

That's part of the big "non-scenario" news from Novastar, but it's a two-fold announcement: An update (version 1.27) of *Battles of Napoleon*, and a new *Modern Database Disk*. Version 1.27 continues game creator Norm Koger's efforts to refine and perfect the system, with some modest patching and rules clarification. (Please note that this patch is not supported by SSI: it's from Koger and Novastar exclusively.) Bigger changes, however, are made in the *Modern Database Disk*, which includes about 152 countries and over 350 modern units. This is a pretty big data overhaul, and Novastar is supporting it with twenty new scenario disks concentrating



Better pattern-running torpedoes spell doom for convoys.



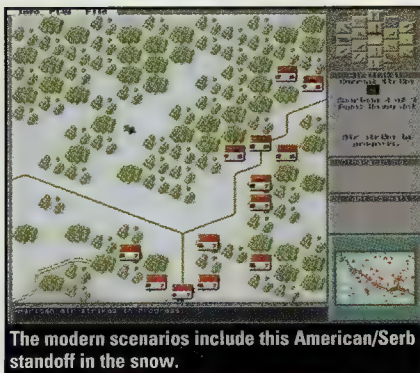
New gauges track buoyancy in *Aces of the Deep*.

on these additional units. The first, *Modern Database Scenario Disk #21*, features the U.S. Armored Cav (Heavy) in 10 missions against Chinese, Russians, North Korean, Serbian, Iranian, and other modern forces. Cool stuff.

Four more *Tanks!* disks featuring World War II battles are also now ready: #3 (Utah and Omaha Beaches), #9 (North Africa: Battleaxe, Alam Alfa, and Sidi Rezegh), #14 (North Africa: Tobruk, Mersa Matruh, Sidi bouzid, Cauldron North, and Cauldron East), and #13 (1973 Arab/Israeli War: Egyptian and Syrian fronts). For *Battles of Napoleon*, a massive *American*

Revolutionary War set is available with almost four dozen battles!!! Some oddball Napoleonic Battles (Toulon, Lutzen, etc) are also modeled in *BON Scenario Disk #8*, with a dozen battles in toto. You simply will not find simulations for many of these battles anywhere else, so wargame enthusiasts should keep an eye on Novastar. Better yet,

if you've always wanted to game a particular battle, call them up and tell them.



The modern scenarios include this American/Serb standoff in the snow.

Man, those guys are busy. What's more, they're working with SSI to distribute out-of-print classics like *Gettysburg*, *Shilo*, and others (possibly in new VGA versions); creating scenario editors for several Gary Grigsby games; and planning to support the forthcoming *Age of Rifles: Wargame Construction Set III* and *Steel Panthers*. These are some real wargame enthusiasts, and if you want to know more about any of their titles, contact them at Novastar Game Co., 3505 Midas Ave., Rocklin, CA 95677, (916) 624-7113. Tell 'em you saw it in the pages of *PC Gamer*.

Bug Patches

1830 Upgrade: Allows the game to run with 2700 EMS and corrects lock-ups found when trying to buy a train from the bank when the bank has no trains.

1942: Pacific Air War v.1.5

Alien Logic v.1.1

Bioforge Gravis Ultrasound Patch: Fixes music only, but not the digital sound effects.

F-14 Fleet Defender v.2.0 (for original Fleet Defender only): Adds fixes found in *Fleet Defender Gold*.

Great Naval Battles III v.1.1

Harpoon Classic for Windows v.1.55: Fixes more general protection faults.

Iron Cross v.1.01 Sound Patch and Added Scenarios: Provides new sound drivers and adds six new scenarios.

Jagged Alliance v.1.11: General maintenance patch.

Ravenloft: Stone Prophet v.1.1

Rules of Engagement 2 v.1.07

Tank Commander v.1.1: Handles data loss in serial and modem play found on faster PCs, as well as some other bugs and crashes.

The Daedalus Encounter v.1.1: General maintenance.

Tigers on the Prowl v.1.23: Fixes all reported problems and adds a few new options that can be selected to speed up game play (with just a slight loss in game accuracy).

Tornado Patch: Corrects lockups on the preferences screen.

U.S. Navy Fighters v.1.1: Fixes various bugs and hangups.

Warcraft v.1.21 Upgrades: Offers improved sound card support, increased 2-player game speed and many more fixes. Also includes the unit editor!

Warlords 2 AWE 32 Patch: Vastly improves the sound quality for SoundBlaster AWE 32 users.



The Type XXI in AOD is equipped with radar.

PCG

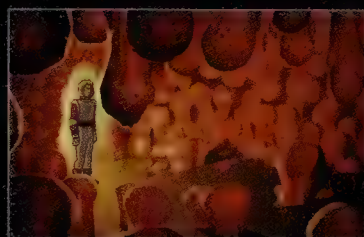
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Product Information Number 128

It's a Wonderful Web

On the World Wide Web, no one can hear you scream. And I've done a lot of screaming since I discovered this friendly and vast Internet resource. Most of my screaming has been gleeful and amazed, although some has been born of frustration.

I usually talk about commercial educational software in this column, but this month I'll discuss the Web because, to my mind, it could be the most important breakthrough in electronic education. It brings information from all over the world to your desktop, creating the illusion that all those gigabytes of data are right there in your home.

To understand the impact of this new technology, imagine you're fixing sandwiches for your kids who are napping in the next room. Suddenly, you realize you're out of bread. So you type a code on a keyboard, and, within seconds, a fresh loaf is delivered directly to your bread box. The Web can satisfy information shortages — or even cravings — in much the same way.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Web

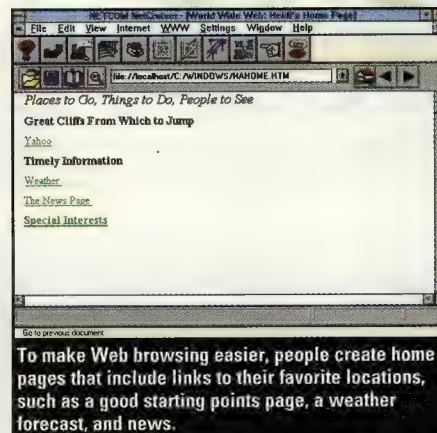
To access the Web, you first need to find a good source of information, some special software, and a pathway onto the Internet. For information, I relied on two books: *The Internet Roadmap* by Bennett Falk (which I highly recommend as a meaty, well-written introduction to many services in addition to the Web), and *The World Wide Web Bible* by Bryan Pfaffenberger. *The World Wide Web Bible* not only explains the Web clearly, but it also includes some software — a program

that connects your PC to the Internet, and a very basic program that lets you browse the resources on the Web. I don't recommend the Web browser program, but the book is clear and enjoyable.

As for actually finding an Internet access route, many people check at work, local universities, or public libraries. You can also get to the Web through a commercial Internet provider, or an online information service such as CompuServe or America Online.

This column is too small to include all the information you need to get up and running on the Web. However,

web. There are many different kinds of Web pages: home pages, which serve as menus of the info available at a particular Web site; starting point pages, which are a public index of many Web sources on various topics. Almost all pages will include links to other, related pages; in fact, it's rare to find a page that doesn't include at



To make Web browsing easier, people create home pages that include links to their favorite locations, such as a good starting points page, a weather forecast, and news.

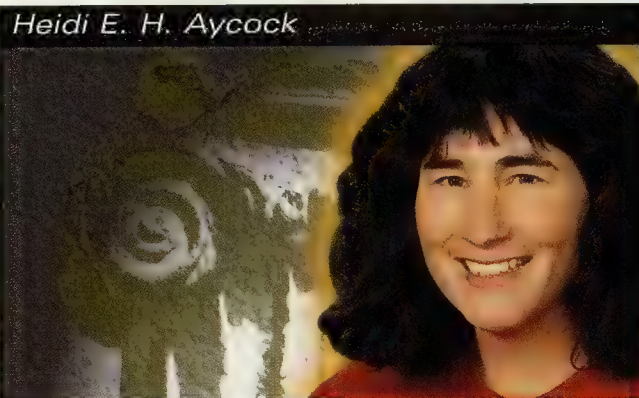
least one link to another page.

Links are the pathways through the Web, the strands that connect the pages of the Web. Links go in many directions, a lot like the hypertext in a good multimedia encyclopedia. They basically move you from page to page and even between separate Web sites by automatically feeding your browser the right URLs, for Universal Resource Locator; URLs are Web addresses, and while they look as cryptic as DOS file names, good links mean you won't have to pay much attention to them.

What's So Great About the Web?

The Web is a potentially limitless information source for the masses, and just about anyone can learn to navigate it. In a text-based browser, you tab to a highlighted word and hit the return key. If you're using a graphical browser, you click on a highlighted phrase with your mouse, and you'll jump to a new page of interesting information. Then you're off on a great trip through new articles — some with sound clips, video, and graphics.

The beauty is that the trip is transparent. You might jump from a supercomputer in Switzerland to a workstation at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, but to your computer it feels like you've never left that browser program. It really seems like you've got this

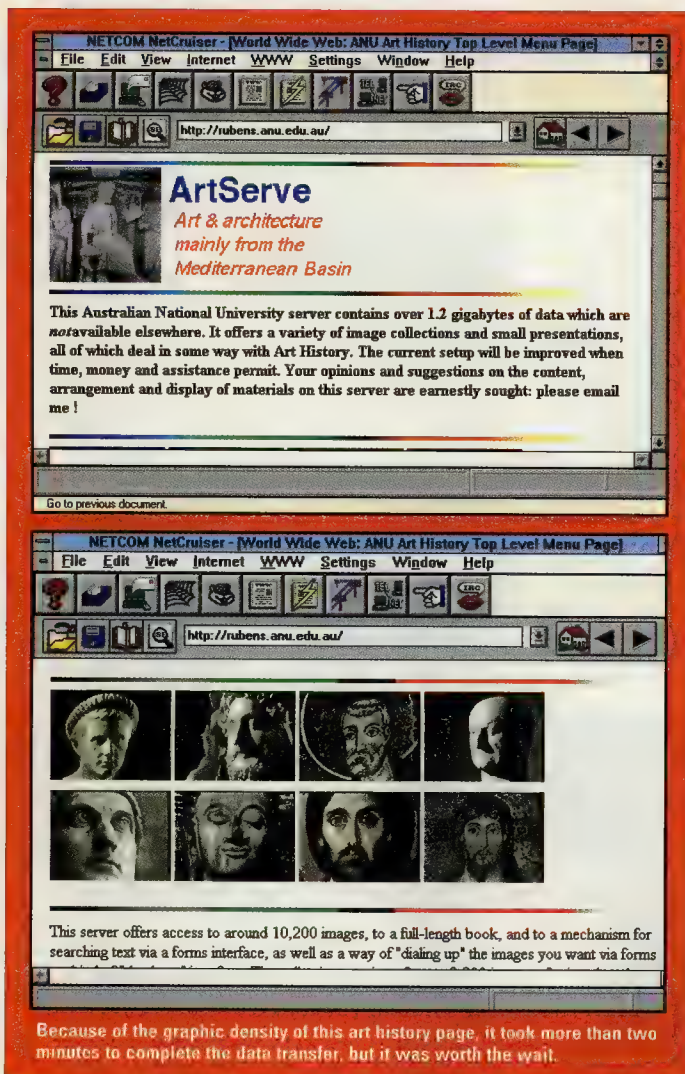


to understand the rest of this column, you may need a few quick concepts.

Web browsers are software packages that allow you to explore the Web. Some, like Lynx, are text-based; if you access the Internet by logging on from your PC at home to a workstation at your office or school, a text-based browser may be your only choice. These browsers are fast and simple to use, but they lack the graphical user interface and the ability to display graphics that more sophisticated browsers offer. So a good, full-featured browser is essential if you're to access the images, sounds, and all the other multimedia elements that help to distinguish the Web from other Internet resources.

If you think of the Web in visual terms, **pages** are the intersections of a spider's

Heidi took a quick spin on the Net this month, and discovered that a whole new world full of educational value for kids and adults is just a few clicks away on the World Wide Web.



enormous hypermedia document on your desktop, when in fact you're logging on and off of computers all over the world. Referring to the URLs embedded in the Web pages, your computer can find whatever link you choose to jump to. And your graphical browser knows how to display the information in living color (and sound and animation).

Thanks to its friendly design, the Web will lure more people onto the Internet, possibly creating a better-informed public, in turn creating a healthier and more productive society. Though no one can vouch for the Web page authors — anyone with the right resources can put up a Web site, so not all the Web's content is of the same caliber, and an alarming amount of it is purely commercial — it is possible to communicate with some of the finest minds in the world.

For all of its positive

qualities, though, there are some negative ones too. First of all, the Web can be incredibly slow. Dialing in through a local university, my access time was noticeably slower than I would experience if I were accessing information from my hard disk. And through a commercial Internet access provider, connections were occasionally so slow that I played *Minesweeper* while browsing the Web so I wouldn't get too bored waiting for transmissions to finish.

There are other disadvantages of a more philosophical nature, such as easy access to pages that are inappropriate for kids (sex sites, for example) — which, to their credit, ask children and prudes to head for higher ground). But my

biggest concern is that many lower income families will be left out of the loop; ideally, an information source as potentially enlightening as the Web would be as affordable as radio or television.

Balancing the pros against the cons, though, these disadvantages hardly nudge the scale. Despite the slowness and other possible problems with the Web, it's a wonderful tool, and parents can use it to great educational advantage.

So What's Up There?

Though I haven't made an exhaustive survey of educational resources on the Web, I have linked with some excellent pages that I want to pass along. As I discuss these pages, I'll include the URLs for those of you who already know how to use them. If you haven't entered the Web yet, ignore the URLs for now, but save them for your first trip.

Because my kids love books, I particularly enjoyed the Children's Literature Web Guide at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/index.html>. From this page, you can link to a nice collection of resources: a list of Children's Book Award winners, a list of recommended reading, a list of banned books, and even a list of upcoming movies based on children's books (would you believe a Muppet Treasure Island?). Besides lists, there are links to discussion groups on authors, articles on child development, and brochures on helping kids learn to read.

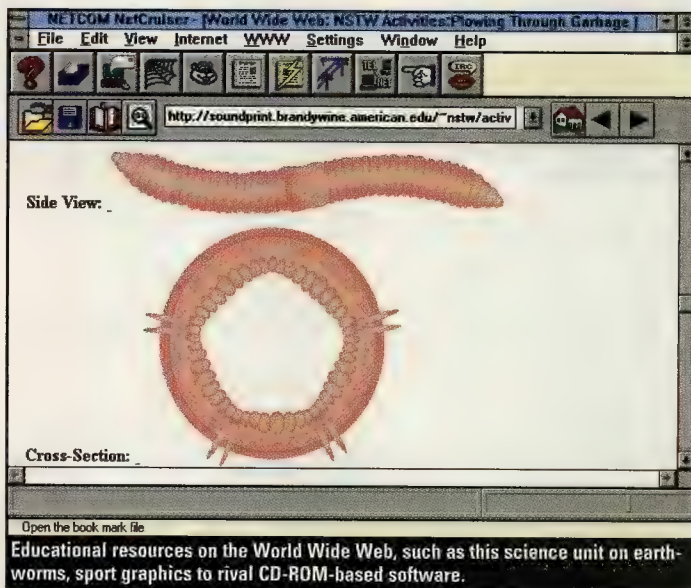
Then there are the links just for kids: links to cyber-magazines that publish stories and pictures by kids, links to discussion groups about their favorite books, and links to games.

On another topic pertinent to kids, the National Science and Technology Week page at <http://soundprint.brandywine.american.edu/~ntsw/activities/activities.html> offers project ideas related to the 25th anniversary of Earth Day. For example, the page offers links to interactive lessons on earthworms, paper-making, solar energy, and constellations. For more science resources, try the Cornell Math/Science Gateway at <http://www.tc.cornell.edu:80/Edu/MathSciGateway>. Though it's probably intended exclusively for teachers, the Math/Science Gateway is a treat for parents, and kids will find links especially for them.

For one example of the many children's creative writing magazines, try Cyberkids at <http://www.woodwind.com/mtlake/index.html>. If you want to see the graphics that go with the stories, prepare yourself for a long wait; but this page shows how children can easily publish on the Web.

But all this is just for starters, and really all I have room for this time. But you can expect to hear more about the Web in this column; I plan to keep an eye on this powerful resource from here on out.

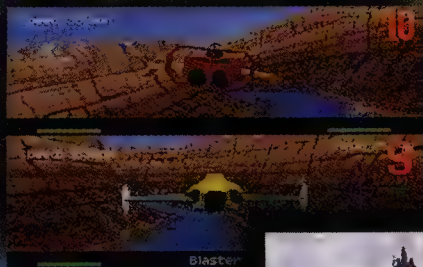
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Product Information Number 122

New GUI Goodies



hew! I almost blew my deadline this month, and you'll NEVER guess why; I've actually been playing *Pacific Strike*, that's why! After flying *Wing Commander III* and *Wings of Glory*, I was in the mood for an Origin-style WWII sim,

and since I've got that new Pentium 100, I decided to give the old girl another chance.

Now that frame rate and detail aren't a factor, the only remaining annoyances are the single-channel digital sound and occasional lock-ups. *PS* producer Eric Hyman once told me that he was going to continue tweaking the game on his own time, despite its "dead issue" status, and I hope that's true. I'm reserving a CD-ROM slot for it, just in case.

Logon

America Online's Preview of Version 2.5 for Windows has been available for a while, and it's got lots of cool new features, most notably a speedy World Wide Web browser.

Unlike CompuServe's NetLauncher, which establishes a PPP link with the Internet outside of WinCIM, AOL's Internet Connection services are integrated within AOL itself. This addresses the common Web-surfer's complaint that finding what you want is often a random, difficult, and time-consuming task.

Each of AOL's 14 service categories features a high-lighted selection of the most popular Web sites, categorized by topic. The best music-related material, for example, will be grouped together under Music (gosh!), regardless of whether the content is stored on AOL itself or on Web servers. So you'll be able to have Web Pages and AOL screens open simultaneously,

and chat, send E-mail and Instant Messages, and download at the same time. The final release of 2.5 should be available by the time you read this.

CompuServe has just released WinCIM 1.4 (GO WNCIM to download) that allows you to navigate CIS using linked hypertext documents, and use enhanced versions of existing Internet features, like File Transfer Protocol (FTP) and Usenet Newsgroups.

WinCIM 1.4 also supports the Windows Sockets (Winsock) interface, which gives members direct access to CompuServe using an existing Internet account - perfect if you can't access a local CIS dial-up number, or don't have

impressive demo, VPDEMO.EXE, from the Windows Games library on AOL, or GO GAMAPUB - Library 16 - Other Publishers on CompuServe. Of course, if you bought the CD-ROM edition of *PC Gamer*, you've already got the demo on The CD.

And since you already trust Ian's "Judgment," you might also enjoy a Windows utility he recommended. It's a tasteless little piece of Beerware (any money you send the author will be spent on beer) by Tom Zahorik called *The Virtual*



GEIE's lovely new (Version 2.0) GUI for Windows. Mighty Nice, dontcha think?

Scott Wolf



a modem but do have a LAN connection to the Net.

GEIE, too, has gotten a beautiful new graphical front end (Version 2.0) with some new features and redesigned interfaces for existing services like Electronic Mail, Software Libraries and Real Time Conferences. At press time, GEIE's Internet access was still in beta test, and their Web browser, LYNX, was a text-mode VT-100 emulator that, while not pretty, was fast.

A Momentary Lapse of Reason

You may not know that Ian Firth, author of the popular *Prairie Dog Hunt 2: Judgment Day*, has also written the neat commercial submarine game for Windows, "Grey Wolf: Hunter of the North Atlantic," and is finishing up a space strategy adventure, "Void Pirates." You can download the

It's Christmas time in August, with online gifts for all in The Wolf's goodie bag. It's just full of software updates, sneak peeks, programming tips, new utilities, and just plain fun.

Anus. It places a guy on your screen who randomly drops his pants, bends over and gives you a sphincter salute. V-ANUS.ZIP is in the General Games/Fun library on C-Serve.

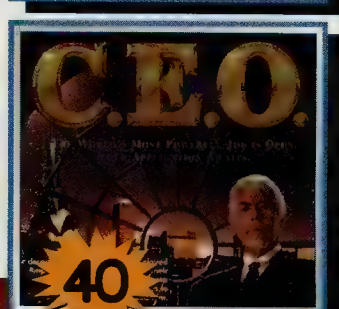
Are you having trouble programming your Thrust-Master equipment (or are you just lazy, like me)? Calana Software is now shipping the final release version of *The Commander*, a Windows utility that makes customizing FCS and WCS II configurations a breeze. Take a look at the demo, CSCDEMO.ZIP, in CompuServe's Library 13 (Hardware) or E-Mail Calana-Soft on AOL for details.

Fans of Electronic Arts' *U.S. Navy Fighters* will find a new world opened up to them courtesy of David Maschino, who's written two utilities that allow you to fly EVERY aircraft in the game — even the helos! Download USNFCH.ZIP and USNFPL.ZIP from AOL in the Flight Simulation library using Keyword Aviation.

Hey, remember Broderbund's classic helicopter game *Choplifter*? Well, David Fleming has written a nice Shareware version of that little sideways scroller, *Airlift Rescue*. You've got three choppers available for a rescue mission of 64 hostages being held ...hmm...somewhere, I guess... with tanks, UFOs and planes all attempting to stop you. It's no graphic extravaganza, but the gameplay is still there.

Airlift Rescue is on AOL in the arcade library, on CompuServe in the Action and PCFun forums and, of course, Software Creations BBS as AIRLIFT.ZIP.

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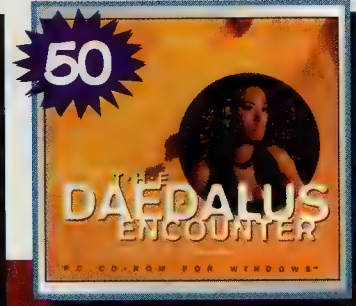
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Virtual Worlds

Virtual Reality is a term that's being thrown around to describe just about everything from high-dollar hardware units to wrap-around movie screens. Several devices are now available for the PC that will allow users to jump into an immersive, three-dimensional world and view computer environments in much the same fashion that they would look around their own backyards.

But even as the advancing technology offers new options for future developers to explore, the concept of a virtual world is not all that new to roleplaying gamers. And with each release, the roleplaying "pocket universes" continue to become more believable and absorbing.

A Look Back

When you take it down a peg, virtual reality is nothing more than a way to work with your computer in an easier, more natural way. In the first text adventures, like *Zork*, *Adventure*, and *Suspended*, players were forced to read text from a text-only screen, create a mental picture of the situation being described, decide the proper action to be taken, and then formulate a way to make that proper action clear to the computer.

The addition of computer graphics added a hook. With titles like *Wizardry*, *Bard's Tale*, and *Ultima*, a few steps were taken out of the translation process, since players could now clearly see everything that was taking place around them. Developers could give players a whole new experience, and be sure that their vision of the world was being delivered exactly as they wanted it to be.

Even so, there's a kind of abstract thought required to make yourself believe that a

small, pixelated icon represents you. And so no matter how good the storyline or action was, turn-based action and overhead perspectives constantly reminded that you were playing a computer game.

The next step was to eliminate the turn based movement and combat system. Titles like *Ultima Underworld* and *Arena: The Elder Scrolls* let players feel as if they were walking around in another world. Time passed, sleep was necessary, and non-player characters went on with their lives in a normal fashion instead of sitting around waiting for the player to show up and talk to them. If an object was dropped or thrown, it

headsets for the home are all based on a low density LCD matrix," Garriot continued, "and have one of two problems: either they've spread the pixels out over a large distance, which makes the picture look grainy; or makes it look like they're looking at a screen through a pinhole.

"In a generation or two of that technology, when the machine speeds are high enough and resolutions are up, we should have VR hardware that will be absolutely phenomenal," he said. "This is what I've been waiting for. As soon as the technology reaches the right point, rest assured that we'll be creating living, breathing virtual worlds."

Trent C. Ward



stayed put until someone (or something) else came along and picked it up. The end result was a game that pulled the player into another dimension. Real-world physics, open storylines, and the deeper personalities of the NPCs all worked together to create a believable fantasy realm.

An Expert Opinion

Richard Garriot, founder of Origin Systems, is still trying to push the limits of what can be achieved in a fantasy simulation. He discussed the virtual reality concept in a recent interview. "I think there are two ways to look at virtual reality," he said. "You can look at it from the sensory side — headsets, gloves, and technology — or you can view it from the intellectual side, the creation of realistic computer simulations.

"The current round of VR

Trent gets the lowdown on how meshing virtual reality technology with the traditional computer role-playing game might just change the RPG niche market into a mass market of alternate realities.

Achieving "True 3D"

Now Bethesda is preparing to release *Daggerfall*, the sequel to *Arena*. This is the game that hardcore FRPG fans have been waiting for since the beginning. More than just an adventure tale, *Daggerfall* will introduce players to a mirror land inside their computer that looks and feels like real-life. Less dangerous, maybe, but just as exciting.

The first improvement you'll notice is a true 3D environment. There are hills, mountains, and rooftops that can be explored, with gradual slopes instead of sharp drop-offs. Even more impressive is the idea that your character will be able to own property above and beyond the typical knife, backpack, and armor of most RPGs. Houses and ships can be bought and sold, goods can be traded, and their prices will fluctuate depending on the political and civil situations in the game. If they accumulate enough cash, players can even build their own dungeons. Conversations between a character and an NPC are remembered, and favors done for one man may be remembered by his heirs years later.

Head-mounted displays (HMDs) will also be supported, so that players can view the world around them in the same manner that they would if they were actually an adventurer in an alternate dimension. All of this, running on machines that even three years ago would have been but a dream for the average computer owner, are bringing users ever-closer to the perfect virtual content world that Garriot talked about.

There will always be a place for the traditional computer RPG (not everyone wants to be immersed all the time), but virtual roleplaying is on its way. Over the next few years, RPGs have the potential to change from what is now a niche market into a mass-market of alternate realities. I really think this is the future for the RPG — a move from the game board to the game world, from fantasy to near-reality.

PCG

Idylls of Summer

The "toy soldier" roots of *The Perfect General II* are plain to see: battlefields designed not to conform to historical maps, but to provide as many tasty and tantalizing tactical options as possible; a finite number of "pieces" rather than abstractions of large units; visual and sound effects with all the

blood-and-thunder details that tabletop wargamers must otherwise supply with imagination.

There are times, playing it, when your mouse becomes a metaphysical extension of your hand, when you actually feel as though you were literally moving units, or getting down on your knees and squinting over a tank turret to determine your line of sight to an enemy target.

I became a collector of toy soldiers sometime around 1950, and soon acquired a small circle of friends who shared that passion. Until that time, our boundless energies had been mostly channeled into cowboy scenarios, complete with epic cap-pistol shootouts that were usually staged in our parents' garages or in a weedy vacant lot conveniently close to our houses.

What turned me from cap-guns to howitzers was the discovery, in my elementary school library, of a book entitled *A Green Field for Courage*. It was published, I think, in 1944, and I have long since forgotten the author (when I lived in New York, sixteen years later, I searched all the secondhand bookstores, but never turned up a copy), but the book exerted a hypnotic spell whose effects haven't left me to this day.

Like me, the boy who was the book's hero was an only child and an introvert whose fantasy life was intense. His pride and joy was a toy soldier collection and he was, in a very real sense, their com-

mander, their leader. His backyard was his domain, and his troops protected it—tiny, magical guardians of an imaginary kingdom. Because the boy's family was poor, his "army" was small and poorly equipped with armor and artillery.

One day, a snotty and bullying rich kid moved in next door—a kid whose parents had bought him the biggest, most heavily armed collection of toy soldiers imaginable. The rich kid rebuffed the poor boy's overtures of friendship, spurned his offers of an "alliance" between their two armies, and eventually launched a massive invasion of his yard.

The hero's little army

included everything from Bren-gun carriers to Centurian tanks.

My grandfather, who seemed to understand my passion better than any other adult, gave me the perfect birthday present: a 15-foot square sandbox in the backyard, shaded by a big oak tree.

In all my little-boy fantasies, I couldn't have wished for a more perfect field of battle. Together with a friend named Ken Jordan, I spent wonderful hours constructing elaborate trenchlines, bunkers, and pillboxes made from Lincoln Logs. Ken and I spent three weeks cutting the neighbors' lawns in order to raise money for a battery of beautifully crafted "Long Tom" how-

itzers fitted with spring-loaded mechanisms that hurled lead shells out to a range of about 15 feet.

How fine it was to wake up on a summer morning and know that there was no school, and that the sandbox was out there waiting—my own domain, my own small world, where desperate but bloodless battles could be waged, where epics of valor could be lived in all the richness of a ten-year-old's imagination, until twilight deepened and the lightning bugs began to glow and our parents' voices would summon us in for supper.

Our toy-soldier days lasted until the onset of early adolescence (when the Testosterone Imperative began to reorder our priorities) and climaxed with the acquisition of a HUGE carbide-gas cannon that produced a terrific flash and bang. We soon discovered that the thing would fire pine cones thirty feet or more—and that pine cones soaked in lighter fluid would ignite and provide a most gratifying spectacle.

Our final series of battles took place at night: in various locations in the sandbox, we dug in dixie-cups full of gasoline ("ammo dumps," of course), and then tried to hit them with flaming pine cones. We only did this on nights when my parents were not home, for they would have been quite properly appalled if they had caught us doing it. My Lord, what a rush it was when we scored a direct hit!

How long ago it seems, and how innocent it was... There aren't any vacant lots left in my home town of Charlotte, not in my neighborhood anyway, and the last time I saw an ad for carbide cannons, the damned things were going for almost a hundred bucks. But that old passion still comes bubbling up when I get my hands on a really good wargame. And as all good gamers know, it's never too late to have a happy childhood...

And by the way, if anybody out there knows where to get a copy of *A Green Field for Courage*, I'd sure like to hear from you.

William R. Trotter



When General Trotter booted up QQP's *Perfect General II*, he discovered that it was a time machine as well as a wonderful wargame. Who says nostalgia ain't what it used to be?

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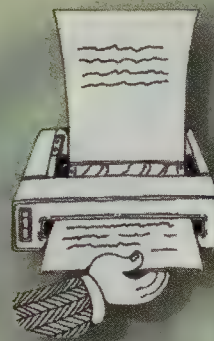
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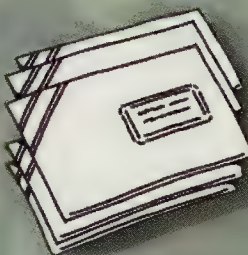
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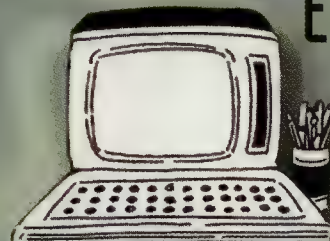
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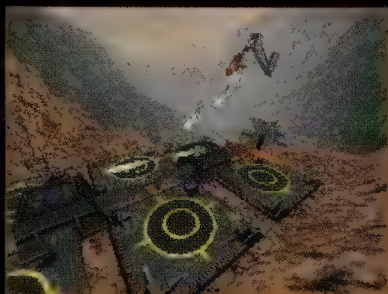
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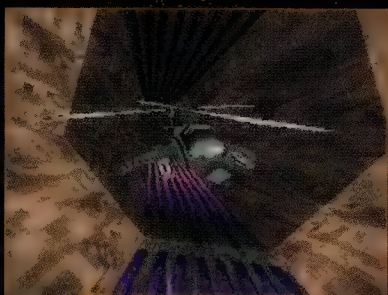


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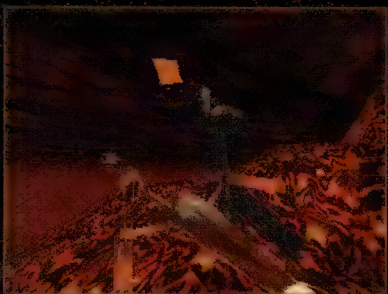


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Online Racer

Papyrus is getting set to roll out an online service that will make the dream of online racing a reality. It's code-named Hawaii, and it's sure to drive up the telephone bills of auto racing fans all over the country. *NASCAR Racing* from Papyrus is already the flat-out best racing sim on the planet, but by this fall it's going to be even more exciting. The multi-player version of the game is set for release in September, and it'll let you race online against as many as 31 other hell-bent-for-leather drivers in a variety of races.

If you've rubbed fenders with a friend in a modem race, you already know how much more exciting head-to-head play can be. Now imagine a field of 30 cars with real people behind the wheel. Heck, there might be a real Winston Cup racer or two in the starting grid. A few of the drivers actually play the computer game, and Papyrus is trying to get them to compete in this virtual version.

The multi-player service has just entered the beta-testing stage; the folks at Papyrus have selflessly volunteered to test the program, often staying late at the office. Don't you feel sorry for them?



Papyrus' online racing service will pit real gamers — and maybe a couple of real-life Winston Cup drivers — against each other on any course, including the tough Sears Point track.

"It's just a blast. The strategy is totally different, because you can't predict what the other players are going to do," says Ed Martin, producer of the multi-racing version. "There's just nothing like it." How intense is the action? At the recent E3 trade show, eager racers broke several joysticks as they raced against one another...

To keep the competition fair for people of different skill levels, Papyrus will track each player's performance and assign him or her a skill rating. Everyone starts at a level-0 rating, then their ability is judged based on the first three races, and they're given a new rating. So somebody who's blowing the doors off experienced

Open events will be geared to players who just want a taste of the action. Each event will include a 10-minute practice, followed by a 10-minute race, with the races cycling through all the tracks. The open races will be just that — no garage settings, no skill levels, just slam-bam racing. "I'm sure there'll be some demolition derbies," Martin says.

The third option — and the one that hard-core racers are gonna love — is league



If these were real people racing, somebody would be mad. Multi-player *NASCAR Racing* promises to take the racing sim to an even higher level of realism.

Lee Buchanan



competitors can't jump down to a lower skill level and run circles around a field of beginning drivers.

"We've looked at some other online games, and our favorite is probably *Air Warrior*," Martin says. "But one of the problems I had with

Air Warrior is that you get in there, hop in a plane, fly around a bit, and then get shot down in a heartbeat. There's no place for beginners to learn."

Papyrus' multi-player service will feature three types of events: open races, pick-up races (no, Junior, not trucks), and league racing. In pick-up races, players schedule an event to their liking, then wait for a field to sign on. Callers can scan the schedule to find a race that suits their style and skill level.

Are you dreaming of taking to the speedway in head-to-head competition with real players driving the other cars? Papyrus is set to make that dream of online racing a reality.

racing. In league races, players will compete for season points and championships, racing a schedule of events held on a regular basis.

Papyrus plans to assign administrators for each league. Those lucky players will be able to determine the racing parameters, set schedules, and keep track of scoring. League administrators will act as sort of a sanctioning body for their events. If someone's not playing nicely — driving the wrong way, or intentionally wrecking other racers — the administrator can blackflag them, force them to the pits, or remove them from the event altogether.

Papyrus will ship the multi-player version free to owners of the game, or players can download the new version. For licensing reasons, Papyrus will also include a generic car set for use in multi-player games, though players will be able to use any car set they want.

To get up and racing, players will call an 800 number and Papyrus will charge by the hour, though Martin isn't ready to specify a fee quite yet. The call will be free, but not really. Papyrus will build the cost of the 800 number into the online rate.

"We aren't going to be a \$2-an-hour type of service, as much as we'd like to be," Martin says. "But we're not trying to gouge people by any stretch of the imagination. We're going after a niche market, and we have to make a little profit."

PCG

PCs vs. Game Systems: Is it Even a Contest?



ou probably already know that there are some terrific videogame systems on the way. Sega's Saturn is already on the market, Sony's PlayStation is nearly ready, and Nintendo's Ultra 64 should come along by early '96. With CD-ROM drives, powerful new processors,

and killer graphics hardware, game consoles are getting more sophisticated — and so are the games that they run.

There was a time when a PC game and a cartridge game were two completely different animals. PC games had lots of depth and strategy, but limited processing power and CGA graphics made the games sluggish and ugly. With just the built-in PC speaker, they didn't sound very good, either. Cartridge games were fast and they looked and sounded great, but most of them involved little more strategy than ducking and jumping or shooting everything that moved.

Modern PCs have faster CPUs, better graphics, and much, much better sound, while the latest CD-ROM game systems can run deeper, more sophisticated games than ever fit in a cartridge. The PC and consoles are starting to look more alike, and the idea's been circulating that one might pose a threat to the other.

Sony, Sega, and Nintendo are battling to be the next standard as game boxes move from 16 to 32 bits — but the PC is already there as an established, successful 32-bit standard. And with some of the changes Windows 95 is bringing, the PC should easily rival the arcade performance of the new consoles.

PCs have made phenomenal progress in the last few years, but the game machines will hit the streets priced at around \$300 — a sum that

barely even pays for the 8MB of RAM in a typical PC. So as cheap and powerful as the next generation of game systems will be, you may be wondering if we should just get Nintendo or Sega boxes to play games, and let PCs get back to word processing and spreadsheets.

I say no, we shouldn't. One of the rules of computer hardware is that everyone's engineers graze on the same technological prairie. They all have access to the same basic processor technologies and silicon fabrication processes. If one company can put terrific 3D rendering hardware in a cheap game machine, then another company should be

ing, an aspect that game boxes will never be able to match.

PCs are also open systems, unlike proprietary game machines. No one needs anyone's permission to get into the PC business, which is why there are so many different models and brands to choose from. Competition keeps prices down, and the variety of machines on the market lets us weigh a PC's performance against its cost, or to trade off CPU power versus graphics speed versus memory capacity at a given price. And they all run the same software.

An open system also makes it pretty darned easy to become a software developer.

Tim Victor



able to build affordable PC graphics cards that are just as whizzy. Which is what a host of companies are doing, including Diamond, Matrox, ATI and Creative Labs. With the 3D graphics accelerator cards that are appearing, PC games should be able to hold their own against anything on a Sony or Sega system.

Polygons aside, one of the PC's biggest advantages is that, simply enough, it's a real computer. All those expensive components that game consoles don't have — a keyboard, lots of RAM, a big hard disk, a high-resolution video monitor — are worth something. Among other things, they mean that you can use your PC to modify and customize the games that you play on it. Extras like the suite of world-editor programs for *Doom* and the car-painting toolkit for *NASCAR Racing* are a unique part of PC gam-

The next generation of game systems like Sega and Nintendo are going to be so cheap and powerful, shouldn't we just let our PCs go back to spreadsheets and word processing? Tim doesn't think so.

Add a \$100 C compiler, shareware painting and ray-tracing software, and a couple of books, and the PC becomes a sophisticated game development system. The distribution options for PC games run a range from downloadable shareware to floppies to CD-ROMs, so developers can get started on a modest scale.

Programming might not be your Jolt Cola, but that low entry barrier is one reason why the most creative game ideas are coming from PC game designers. And why the console machines, despite their newfound sophistication, are dominated by platform games and *Street Fighter* clones.

In general, PCs are incredibly flexible machines. The same system that you use to play *Dark Forces* would work just as well as an engineer's CAD workstation, as a financial data server in an office, or as a page-layout station at a publishing company. No matter how well PCs run games or how much fun the games are, most of us at least considered some of the very important extras you can only get from a personal computer: connecting with the Internet and other online services, helping out with schoolwork or office work, or to finally start writing that novel. Games are just a part of the picture.

In the end, it simply isn't fair to compare a PC with a dedicated game system — not to either machine. It's like the difference between a car and a motorcycle: either one will get you from place to place, but if you're shopping for one, you probably aren't even considering the other. PCs and game systems might have similar graphics and sound hardware and run some of the same games, but the differences between them are just as important as the similarities.

Game systems are inexpensive, but they're built for just one purpose; PCs do an amazing range of things, including games, which arguably makes them a better value despite their initially higher cost. You just have to decide which is more important to you.

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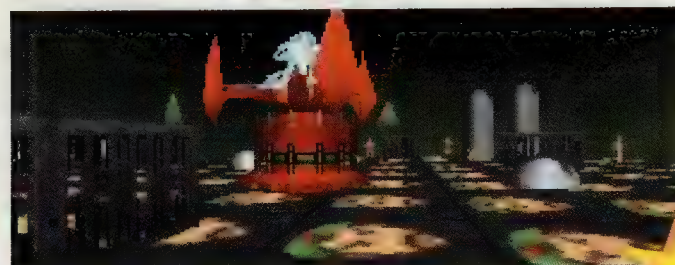


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STRATEGY CENTRAL

SOLUTIONS • TECHNIQUES • QUICK TIPS

We've searched and scoured the *PC Gamer* archives (a converted wine cellar, really), and called upon our inside sources to provide you

with cheats, hints, and solutions to those gaming dilemmas you've been asking about. And to get things off to an explosive start, we've uncovered a complete listing of *Dark Forces* codes...

Write to us at:

PC GAMER

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Burlingame, CA 94010

or e-mail:

peeceeggee@aol.com

74431,3433@compuserve.com

djee52a@prodigy.com

Dark Forces

We admit it — we're rebels at heart. And here are the cheat codes we live by.

Last month we took you on a guided tour through the toughest mission of LucasArt's *Dark Forces*, and while a lot of you found the information helpful, we've been inundated with e-mail, faxes, and letters wanting to know if there are any cheat codes to make life a little easier when trying to take out those hostile Imperial types. So if you're among those looking for a little relief, help is on the way!

Just type the following codes during any mission...

LABUG - BUG MODE:

This cheat lets you squeeze through narrow passages and greatly reduces

your size when crouching (very helpful in the garbage crusher).

LACDS - REVEAL MAP:

Use this cheat to get a full map of your current level and locations of all enemies, objects and doors.

LADATA -

REVEAL NAVIGATION COUNTER:

Useful in marking the exact coordinates of items and important corridors.

LAIMLAME - INVINCIBILITY TOGGLE:

No shoot-'em-up would be complete without a God Mode, and when you type LAIMLAME in *Dark Forces* you'll get exactly that.

LAMAXOUT -

Full ammo, shields and weapons; plus complete inventory of items all maxed out.

LANTFH -

This cheat allows you to teleport to the current map position one level above or below your current location.

LAPOGO -

Disables height checking: Allows you to reach those high precipices and ledges without any cumbersome climbing gear.

LAPOSTAL -

Get all weapons and ammo.

LARANDY -

This cheat produces the same effect as the weapon super charge power-up, giving you an increase in rate of fire from all weapons for 50 seconds.

LAREDITE -

Freezes enemies in their tracks. All enemies take damage in this mode, but you'll need to toggle it off before it takes affect.

LASKIP -

Typing this cheat successfully completes the current level.

LAUNLOCK -

Get all keys, code cards, the broken Dark Trooper gun, data tape, ice cleats and Phrik metal.

Level Codes

And for those of you stuck in the early levels of the game, the following cheats are just the thing to let you take a peek at the adventures ahead. Just type in the cheat during the game, and you're on your way.

LASECBASE -

Level 1: Secret Base (The Death Star Plans)

LATALAY -

Level 2 Talay: Tac Base

LASEWERS -

Level 3 Anoat City (The Subterranean Hideout)

LATESTBASE -

Level 4 Imperial Weapons Research Facility

LAGROMAS -

Level 5 Gromas Mines

LADTENTION -

Level 6 Imperial Detention Center

LARAMSHED -

Level 7 Ramsees Hed Docking Port

LAROBOTICS -

Level 8 Robotics Construction Facility

LANARSHADA -

Level 9 Nar Shaddaa

LAJABSHIP -

Level 10 Jabba's Ship

LAIMPCITY -

Level 11 Imperial City

LAFUELSTAT -

Level 12 Fuel Station

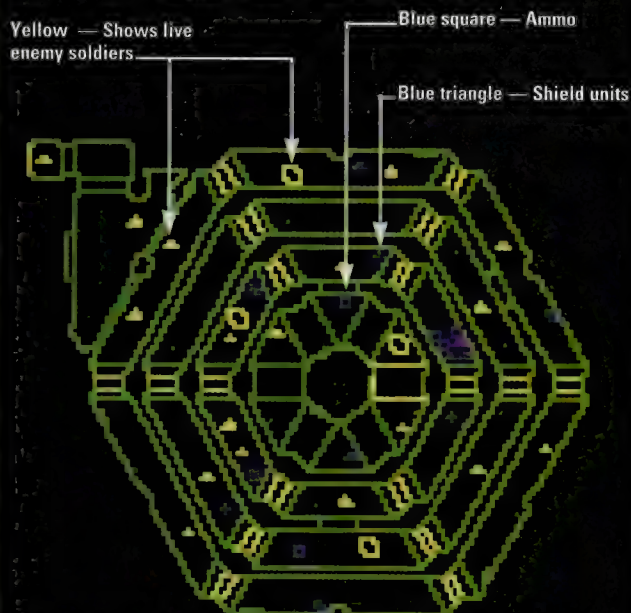
LAEXECUTOR -

Level 13 The Executor

LAARC -

Level 14 The Arc Hammer

FINDING YOUR WAY



This map is revealed when you use the LACDS cheat code. Symbols not shown above: gray triangle — dead enemy; orange triangle — door switch.

Lost Eden

Gettin' on the good foot in Virgin's mammoth new adventure game.



Understanding anything this blue-faced fellow says is pretty difficult, but if you strengthen Dina's courage with a certain talisman, she'll translate his words for you.

In the beginning...

Before Prince Adam can fulfill his destiny as the architect of a peaceful new empire, he'll need to gain his father's permission to leave the Citadel of Mo. To do that, Adam must first enlist the help of some of the castle inhabitants, and find the flute that his great grandfather used to unite the humans and dinosaurs.

First, guide Adam to the king's chambers and listen to all that the king has to say. Then look at the murals behind the throne (this will prompt the king's aide, Eloi, to excuse himself and go to Adam's room). Leave the Throne Room and enter Adam's room and talk to Eloi, where he'll tell you the young dinosaur Dina awaits beyond the locked gate of the central room, and urgently needs to speak with you.

Go and meet with Dina. She'll tell you of her dying uncle Tau, who also wants desperately to meet with Adam. So naturally, travel with Dina and meet Tau. Listen closely to what he has to say and, before he dies, he'll give you a shell that will allow you to talk to him in the spirit world (don't forget to take his dagger from the nightstand, too). Now return to the Citadel of Mo and journey to the room just left of the King's throne room.

Monk's Room, The Executioner and Beyond

Once inside Monk's room, talk to Monk and he'll tell you some of the history of Mo. Then he gives Prince Adam a talisman as a gift for his coming of age. By using the shell that Tau gave you, you'll discover that the talisman can help Dina overcome her fears.

Now go to the central room, and enter the room on the left—the Executioner's Chamber. Dina will say she

is frightened, and will refuse to enter until you give her the talisman.

Inside, talk to the executioner; Dina will translate his garbled words for you. He will give you another gift (Adam's lucky day!); a tooth and instructions that will get you into the secret passage in Monk's room. Go back to Monk's room and use the tooth on the mummified corpse (naturally) to reveal a hidden passage. Use the tooth again on the skeleton in the next room to open a hidden doorway. Once inside this second room, take the transparent cube from the floor and examine the frescoes on the far wall (be sure to have Dina explain what you're looking at). Once you've seen all of the frescoes, Dina will give you the Architect's flute.



Back to Monk's room

Even though you now have the Architect's flute, you're still not going to be able to convince the king that you should leave without proof that the Tyrann leader Moorkus Rex poses a real threat to all of Eden. Return to Monk's room. Use the transparent cube on the strange tablet, and you'll see and hear Moorkus Rex describe his plans to rule all of Eden. Take the tablet from Monk once you're done, and go back to the king. The king will now agree to let you leave the palace to begin uniting dinosaurs and humans to fight Moorkus and attempt to restore peace to the world.

Chamaar

With the architect's flute, you'll be able to build your first citadel in Chamaar. But first you must gain the trust of the people and dinosaurs of the valley. Go to the forest and gather mushrooms to give as gifts to Chong, the Apatosaurs, and the Brontosaurus (be careful to pick only the big mushrooms, as the others are poison.)

Chong and his people will happily join you after you present them with this gift, but the brontosaurus will need a little proof that Adam is the true heir of the Architect before they'll begin working with humans to build the citadel. Use the flute with the brontosaurus, and the first citadel will be built.



Reader's Requests



With all the shops, rides, and conveniences at your disposal, you'll soon be at the helm of the greatest amusement park in the world!

Theme Park

Dear Strategy Central,

I really enjoyed the tips you gave in the December '94 issue for Bullfrog's fun economic sim *Theme Park*, and after following your advice, I was able to build an amazing park that brought in customers by the thousands. And while the tips certainly helped me beat the game, you seem to have left out one very important thing that makes it a little easier to get your park built — and can even make the experience more fun.

There are four really neat cheats that are available with just a few simple keystrokes. When you're at the startup screen, (where you're asked to type in a nickname) type **HORZA** in order to enable the cheats. Then just start a new game and add the name **HORZA** to the name list. Now you're ready to begin cheating!

First off, press **CTRL + C**, and you'll be able to score yourself a pretty healthy bankroll of \$50,000 to begin building your dream amusement park. And the best part of this cheat is you can use it as many times as you want.

But that's only the beginning. By pressing **Alt-Z**, you'll be able to get all the rides — from coasters to merry go-rounds — without using

any of your newfound wealth. Press **Ctrl-Z** to get all those shops that help you keep your customers happy while they're enjoying the rides, and last but not least, by pressing **Shift + Z** you'll get access to trees, bathrooms, and other facilities that make your park such a pleasant playground for all those paying patrons.

I hope these cheats will help anybody who might have missed your tips, or just wants an easy way to get their dream park under construction.

Thanks for such a great mag!

Joshua Ryan
Waikiki, Hawaii

Aloha, and thanks for the cheats, Josh. We had a good time trying 'em all out, and had a top-notch amusement park built in a matter of minutes.

Syndicate

Dear Strategy Central,

Help me! I recently purchased Bullfrog's *Syndicate Plus* CD-ROM, and it's definitely one of the coolest games I've ever played. And while I love the challenge of the different missions and moving my team through the cities, I haven't been able to get past the first few missions due to the tough opposition from the rival syndicates. I was wondering if you know of any cheats that might help me get better weapons, money, or maybe one that would let me skip some of the missions so I can finish the game. Any help would be appreciated.

Michelle Eiger
Tacoma, Washington

Don't worry Michelle, we've got just what you're looking for. These cheats will help you get back on track, and make the job of cleaning those mean streets a little easier. Just rename your team one of the following names (depending on which cheat you want to enable) and you'll be all set.

NUK THEM - Select any country on the map.

COOPER TEAM - Get money and items.

WATCH THE CLOCK - Speeds up the clock allowing for faster research completion.



Jazz Jackrabbit

Energize your Bunny!

Never let it be said we don't enjoy a good arcade game, and we've certainly found just that in Epic Megagames' *Jazz Jackrabbit*. And while the action is as good as it gets, our years of being spoiled by cheats for all our favorite action, adventure, and strategy games left us wondering if there were any hidden codes that might help us get through some of the tougher Jazz levels.

After talking to all our sources, we came across a treasure chest of cheats that let you become invincible, get all the weapons, and even a few that provide some really fun surprises. In order to enable these cheats you'll need to pause the game by pressing the "P" key, then hit the Backspace key before you type in the code for the cheat you want to enable.

Note: In some versions of *Jazz Jackrabbit*, you have to add the letters **DD** before each cheat.

SABLE - Turn Jazz red and get a big increase in speed.

CSTRIKE - Gives you a flying surfboard.

BAD - Gives you the escort bird.

DOOM - Makes the enemies tougher.

KEN - Exit to DOS.

HOOKER - Collect a gem.

MARK - Kills Jazz.

APOGEE - 16 color mode which runs at half the speed.



You can mix and match these cheats to make Jazz a high-powered killing machine. Here he has all weapons, a surfboard and an escort bird to blast through the levels.

LAMER - Skip the current level.

HOCUS - Teleport around the current level.

BOUF - Become invincible.

GUNHED - Get all weapons + 100 rounds of ammunition for each.

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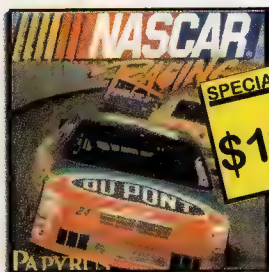
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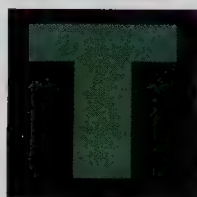
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though we get hundreds of them each and every week, we read all your letters; after all, you guys are ultimately the bosses around here, so we'd bet-

ter make sure we know what's on your mind.

This month, *Descent* seems to be the hot topic, although most of the letters have been about the same: "This game is great!" There were a few dissenters, though...

Descenting Opinions

Sorry Guys,

But I have to disagree with you about *Descent*. I don't think that it's even half the game *Doom* is. When I first played *Doom*, I was totally blown away by the realistic feel of the controls, and I actually yelled once when I

turned a corner and saw a shotgun-wielding mutant standing before me.

When my friend brought me the demo of *Descent*, I sat and blew away robot after robot, rescued hostages, la de da de da, and quit after 10 minutes. It's boring. *Doom* held my attention; *Descent* is just dull.

And on the subject of first-person shoot-'em ups, I don't think you're giving *Dark Forces* enough credit. If you ask me, *Dark Forces* blows *Doom* out of the water; the graphics are far superior, and it runs more smoothly. On top of that, the levels actually have a point to them, and there are some bitchin' cut scenes. *Dark Forces* has more options, like crouching, jumping, and looking up and down.

Basically, I'd rank these titles (1) *Dark Forces* (2) *Doom*, and coming in dead last, (3) *Descent*. Sorry, fellas, but I think you're just way off base on these games. Love the mag, tho.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Siders
Milwaukee, WI

We've been getting a lot of mail about Descent, but it hasn't changed our minds: Descent beats out Dark Forces, 96% to 92%. And Doom, which came out before the magazine started so wasn't given a rating, did manage to take our



Lovely, lovely weaponry poised to take out that six-degrees-of-freedom sonofa...

top honors as the Best Game of All Time (see Vol. 1, No. 3, August 1994).

Most importantly, though, we think you should give *Descent* a second chance. You obviously love the first-person thing, and you're missing one of the best if you don't play *Descent*. Just take a look at the next letter...

Dear PC Gamer,

You guys almost always do right by me as far as reviews are concerned, but you really screwed up on *Descent*. My problem with your rating is simple: Why didn't it get 100%? How could you find anything to dislike about this amazing, true 3D, smooth-scrolling, fast-action masterpiece?!? I know, you gave it a good rating, but jeez! You guys are supposed to be the experts, and here you come across the most perfect game ever created and you don't even recognize it for what it is! If it had been a snake...

Still a fan, though,
Neal Chesnykowski
via CompuServe

See? Descent really is a great game, Benjamin! Old Neal wouldn't steer you wrong! And sorry, Neal. We figured giving Descent that mighty, almost unattainable 96% would be good enough although we didn't count on the sheer passion the game obviously inspires.

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New Blood Wanted

Dear PC Gamer,

I'd like to say that your CD-ROM edition is very fairly priced, even up here in ever so faraway Canada; and if you're wondering, no, it is not that cold way up here, and I do not say "eh" at the end of every sentence. Only every second or third.

The real reason I'm writing is because I'm getting a little tired of seeing the same old computer game manufacturers. I think there's a real need for some new blood in the industry. Sure there are some really interesting titles out there, but where are the companies that are willing to take a risk and try a totally new game — not a copy of *Doom*? I'd really like to see some really neat, new, innovative games. The reason we don't is probably that the computer game market is, unfortunately, getting harder and harder to break into.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Keen
Halifax, Nova Scotia (on the Atlantic coast if you have a map),
Canada (ranked No. 1 by the U.N., if ya didn't know)

P.S.: Who says that Canadians don't have any Patriotism...Eh?

You're right, it can be tough to break into game design. But as the market grows, so will the opportunities — and hopefully, we'll start seeing the variety you're talking about, eh? We'll keep our fingers crossed, OK?

Another Memory Management Tip

Dear PC Gamer,

When I read the article "DOS for Gamers," I noticed there was one trick missing. If you're running DOS 6.x, there's a file in the DOS directory called MEMMAKER.STS. And in this file is a listing of all the files that are loaded

through CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT, complete with final and maximum sizes for each. Open this file with a text editor, then scroll down to a subheading called SIZE DATA, and write down each TSR program or driver and its maximum size.

Next, open your CONFIG.SYS and re-order the way the programs are loaded. Put the program with the largest max size first, the program with the second largest max size second, and so on. Do the same with your AUTOEXEC.BAT, and then rerun MEMMAKER.

If you want more info on this, it's buried in the DOS manual in the chapter on "Making More Memory Available." I tried it, and gained 5K of conventional memory without having to remove any of my drivers or programs. I managed, through far too much tweaking, to push my conventional memory to 604K free. Of course now I'm running into programs like *Wing Commander III* that want all the expanded memory I can free up. When does the hurting stop?

Many Kudos,
Kevin Roughley
via CompuServe

Now that's a fine memory tip! Thanks, Kevin. Armed with this info, those of us who thought we had squeezed every last drop of free conventional memory from our systems may be able to do even better. And if you haven't yet begun to optimize your memory, Kevin's tip is the ideal way to get the job done.

Warp Power

Dear PC Gamer,

I recently purchased OS/2 Warp — with, I must admit, a great deal of skepticism. I was worried that OS/2 would not support many of my games properly. Well, I got it home, installed it, and boy, was I surprised!! Warp ran my games just as well as regular MS-DOS does, and without the annoying problems of the occasional crash. I have been very pleased with Warp, and I think that those who are having trouble with it should:

- 1) read the directions
- 2) download drivers for unsupported peripherals (joysticks, sound cards, etc.)
- 3) speak with someone who has had success with Warp.

With Windows 95 delayed (again), OS/2 has a shot at becoming a dominant operating system, if people would just take the time to understand it. Until then, however, I'll be

Happily WARPing along,
Bob Nielsen
via AOL

Can't argue with you on Warp's ability to

run DOS games, Bob. It really does the job. But as we point out in this month's cover story, DOS games won't be the only titles gamers need to consider. We figure that most publishers will jump on the Windows 95 bandwagon within a year, simply because Windows is Windows, and will be shipping with so many new systems. And nothing is gonna run Windows 95 games as well as Windows 95.

Bully for Bullfrog!

Dear PC Gamer,

I think the gaming gods have smiled down upon us; Peter Molyneux and Bullfrog are going to do a super-hero game! It amazes me that such an obviously great subject for gaming has been neglected for so long. After the King-of-Vaporware, *Champions*, bit the dust a few years ago, it seems like everybody just forgot about the idea. But I have faith in Bullfrog to make us feel that the wait was worth it.

Best Regards,
Bob "Smoke" Smolka
Staten Island, NY

Always nice to hear from The Smoke. And yeah, we're just as excited as you are, Bob. And for those of you who don't know what Champions was, it was a proposed Superhero RPG based on a popular pen-and-paper system. Just another one of those dead-ends in gaming history...

The Waiting Game

Dear PC Gamer,

My first computer was a 386SX/16Mhz with 1MB RAM — which I bought just as the 486/50s were hitting the market. Needless to say, I didn't get much use out of it on the gaming side. So when I moved to upgrade, I figured I'd save a few bucks by going for a 486/33 "Multimedia" machine with 4MB RAM. But within a few months, I was kicking myself for not going with at least a DX2 66Mhz.

Which brings me to my question. I want to get rid of the old 486, and I've been watching Pentium prices fall over the last few months. I was just about to buy a P90, when all of a sudden the 100s and 120s started showing up. Then

I read in *PC Gamer* that the next-generation P6 may be out this year! So what do I do? Should I wait for the P6, or should I go with a fast Pentium? I don't want to "upgrade" into something I'll be itching to replace in another six months. Help!

Yours,
Kathy Hauser
via AOL

OK, Kathy. First off, you're right to want to get as fast a machine as you can currently afford. That really is the only way to make sure you won't have to upgrade again any sooner than is absolutely necessary. But the looming P6 does complicate matters — mostly because we haven't seen a next-generation CPU come out so soon after the release of the previous chip.

The P6 will undoubtedly give you a performance boost over the current Pentiums. But as a new CPU, you can expect it to premier at a pretty high price-point. So our recommendation would be to buy the fastest CPU currently available — namely, the 120MHz Pentium — and not worry about the P6. Because even if it was already available, you can bet someone would announce something even faster on the horizon, and then you might decide to wait for that chip. And in the meantime, you're gaming on a 486/33!

So go for the 120 now, and enjoy it. Yes, there will be faster chips coming. But at least you'll be up and running for the time being, and enjoying yourself until it's once again time to step up.

I Shoulda Listened...

Dear PC Gamer,

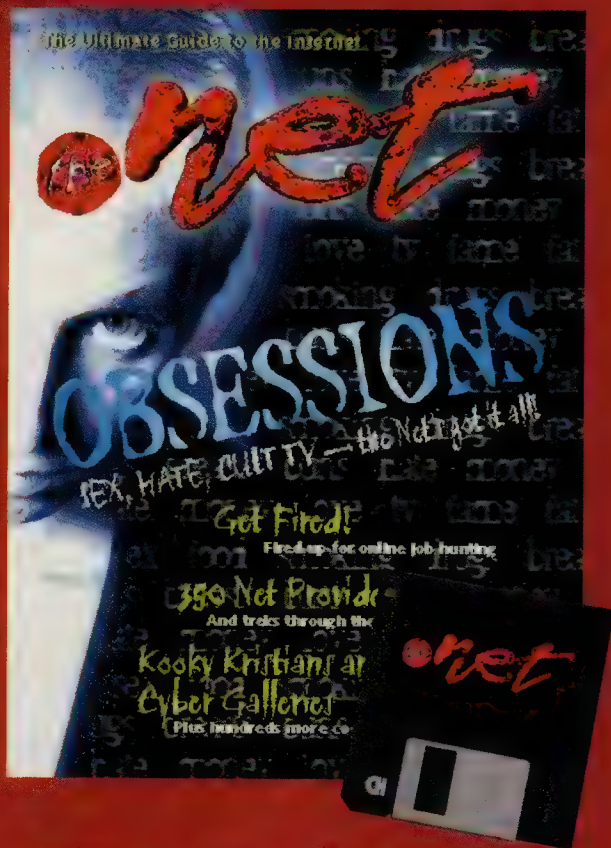
OK, I admit it. I didn't listen to your advice, and man did I ever get burned. See, I read your review of *Slam City* with Scottie Pippen, and even though you dogged it, I went out and bought the thing. What can I say, I'm a Scottie Pippen fan. Anyway, you were right. The gameplay is so incredibly limited, I couldn't believe it!

I still have the game, by the way. It's sitting face-forward on my shelf, to serve as a reminder that I should listen to *PC Gamer* from now on!

A Doubter No More,
Mike Olsen,
NY City

We're glad you learned your lesson, Mike. Sorry it had to come at such a high price.

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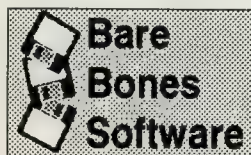
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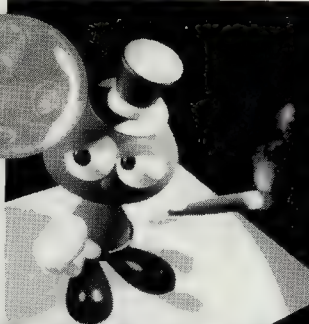
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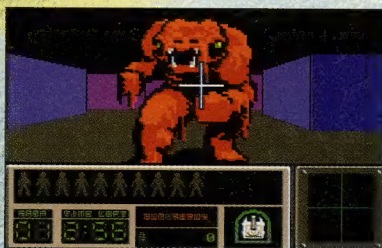
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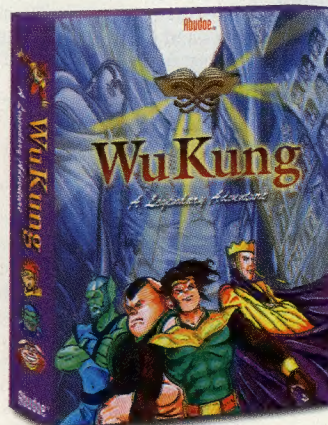
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Product Information Number 82

Next Time in PC Gamer...

Try and remember the kind of September when... ah, hell. Next month's issue will be named September, after the Month, and it'll be filled with many wonders. Among them, we hope to have...

Vol. 2 No. 9
Goes On Sale
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This project is so cutting-edge, so impressively backed, and so hush-hush that for now, we can only hint about it. So let's just mention a few general concepts — Origin, Electronic Arts, Chuck Yeager's Air Combat, Choppers, The Next Generation in Flight Sims. Memorize them. Now tear this page out and burn it before it falls into enemy hands.

I've got an idea
for a game...



Sure, who doesn't? It's one thing to think up a concept, though; getting it to market is quite another matter. That's exactly what the best shareware authors do all the time — and next month, we'll show you a few of their secrets...

And Reviews!

It's going to be a very good month on the review front, with the lowdown on some of the hottest titles we've seen yet this year.

Star Trek: A Final Unity
Space Quest 6:
Roger Wilco in the Spinal Frontier
Kingdom: The Far Reaches
Flight Unlimited
FX Fighter
Orion Conspiracy
...and more!



Plus...

We'll be following all the latest in Windows 95 gaming, as well as working on a special Peripheral Visions to fill you in on the latest Windows 95 hardware. And of course, all your favorite columnists will be back with their usual expert insights and witty repartee, and we'll have a new batch of Scoops! to help you with your holiday wish-lists (never too soon to start, you know).

All this and more,
next time in PC Gamer.

PC GAMER

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Shocked into a state of inaction similar to the effects of the paralysis ray, Chip could only stare. In his confusion, Chip's only thought was, "my, but isn't that a big wrench?" Suddenly, a sharp pain pierced his neck, and seemed to travel down the length of his spine. Falling to the ground, he turned enough to see Pip the Battery Boy watching him fall with an evil grin, the thumbs on his forehead twitching.

He rammed me with his thumbs, Chip thought as he landed with a hard thump. How rude! After that, everything went black. Chip awoke with the General staring down at him, thumbs still sticking out of his head. "Chip? Are you alright?" Chip could see Pip standing behind the General, a look of concern on his face.

Chip checked himself. He seemed to be in working order. "Yes, I'm fine. Where am I?" "A safe place," he replied. "Soon we'll have to move again. Are you up to it?" Chip looked at the thumbs on both Pip and Henderson's head. "Your thumbs."

"Yes, we know. We were finally fixed. You are, too."

Chip looked past the General at a mirror hanging on the wall. His thumbs were now on his forehead. As suddenly as he woke, he slipped back into darkness.

CONTINUED NEXT MONTH!

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